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PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN

LOOKING FOR THE CHURCH.

BY ONE OF THREE HUNDRED.

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A PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN

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CHAPTER I.

THE CONFLICT.

The writer of this narrative was once a Presbyterian ; I may add, that my numerous relatives, near and remote, with a single exception, are Presbyterians still. And that which I had been by birth and education, and without my consent or fault, I afterward became from conviction, and unhappily that species of conviction which is always absolute—satisfied with the potent reasoning, which even to a Nathanael, may sometimes seem conclusive—"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The question was unfortunately one, which modest worth has always found it difficult to answer; and I had never met with a Philip of Bethsaida, to say, "Come and see."

Of the Episcopalians, whose friendship I had enjoyed from childhood up, not one, so far as my recollections serve me, ever made the slightest attempt to proselyte me to his faith; and even after it came to be suspected that my mind was disturbed upon the claims of Episcopacy—when an expression of sympathy, or an exchange of views, or a friendly consultation upon personal and local difficulties, that never find their solution in books and authors, would have been unspeakably refreshing to the mind, then grap-

pling in its own solitude with its new perceptions of truth and duty—still, if the fact be creditable to Episcopalians, I may record it to their praise, that I never met with either layman or priest among them, who seemed so much as to care, whether a wanderer should come into his fold or not; but I felt many a time perplexed by the indifference with which they appeared to entertain a subject, on which my own mind was expending its most restless and intense anxieties. Whether those on the other rounds of the ladder, reaching by God's ordinance from earth to heaven, were so far above me, as not to understand the pressure of an atmosphere that they had never breathed, or had not the skill to reach the helping hand so low; and that those lower down upon the same perceived so little difference between my elevation and their own, as to wonder that I should have suffered inconvenience or should have desired a change; or whether both high and low had forgotten that that ladder, with its facilities for climbing to the skies, was for me as much as for them; it would be irrelevant, and perhaps unbecoming, at present to inquire. It is enough to say, that I was excluded from the sympathies of Churchmen, both high and low; and, in looking at the past, I often feel like one who has made his way across some desert, where the foot-prints of the wanderers, in a thousand different directions, seemed rather to bewilder than to guide, and who therefore must ascribe his preservation and his better fortune to the grace that kept his eye upon the guiding star.

I may not be able to tell the precise moment, up to which I remained a Presbyterian, nor the moment at which I became from conviction an Episcopalian; but one thing I know, that "whereas I was blind, now I see." To speak more accurately, while "seeing men as trees walking," I

had been at no pains to form a definite or fixed conception of the ministry, the sacraments, the keys, the Church ; but had rather passed these matters over, as things that we were not required to define, and which perhaps it were better not to define too nicely ; lest, peradventure, by running lines and fences, we should be found " cursing whom God had not cursed, or defying whom the Lord had not defied." But now that, through the mercy of Him who hath touched my eyes and told me to " look up," I see all things clearly," I am more " ready to give a reason to them that ask me," and to say what that Church with its ministry and sacraments must be ; and, standing on the great fact, that truth is positive and therefore exclusive, I am ready, too, to incur the imputation of an uncharitableness which I can only say my principles do not inspire, and of a bigotry which, I can only add, my private feelings are infinitely far from cherishing. As soon might we hesitate to allow the doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity, for fear of branding with heresy the amiable Unitarian, the martyred Nestorian, or the ancient Sabellian : or, as soon should we hesitate to define carefully and guardedly the awful requisites of repentance, and faith, and prayer, and self-mortification, and holiness, lest we should cast a shade, perhaps a deep and disheartening shade, upon the safety, as regards the future life of many excellent persons—as to withhold accurate definitions of things pertaining to the Church, lest we should rouse the suspicion in others, or be accused of harboring the thought ourselves, that, however well our neighbours excluded by these definitions may be faring, we are persuaded that they might fare better still, and that however safe those beyond these lines may be, we feel some solicitude that they should be safer still.

The truth is, that in a world like this, and with such

hearts as ours, and amidst the endless influences that within us and around us threaten to disappoint the very best of us of His salvation, where no fact is so certain or so terrific, as that even "the righteous shall be scarcely saved;" it is our duty to dig deep, if we would lay foundations for eternity—to make the definitions as accurate as possible—to place and wake the watch at every post—to spare nothing from the means of grace that a merciful God has placed within our reach; if by any means we "may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Although unable perhaps, as already stated, to determine the exact moment of the change which I have undergone, I may yet be able, before progressing a great deal farther with this narrative, to convince even the staunchest believer among my former brethren in instantaneous conversions, that mine to Episcopacy, however gradual and cautious, has been earnest and honest—the result of a conflict deep enough and enough prolonged, to furnish one plausible phenomenon more for the theory of irresistible grace. Indeed, one who has not been fated to pass the same ordeal, can never understand "the fightings without and the fears within," of a soul escaping, as it has been my lot to do, from the mazes of sectarianism, in its endless genealogies, into the genial bosom of the Church.

To abjure a well-compacted system of opinions, to which I have been publicly committed, and which I must now allow that I have held on insufficient grounds—to determine that I will "not consult with flesh and blood," where all who are dear to me in life would earnestly resist me; to resolve that I may not even "go and bid them farewell that are at home at my house," well knowing that I cannot answer their inquiries to their satisfaction; to disturb and

break asunder the ties of brotherhood, which time and a friendly intercourse and many an occasion of "sweet counselling together," have long and endearingly connected; to withhold the homage that nature seems to claim for the ashes of the cherished dead, by appearing to insinuate a defect in their religion, and, with motives easy of misapprehension, to leave "the dead to bury their dead"—to overcome the countless expedients and sophistries to which the heart resorts, in order to persuade itself that whatever be the secret conviction, it is at least unnecessary to avow it openly; to encounter the obloquy that one must look for, in breaking old associations for reasons that, by implication, offend human pride; to admit that I have "run without being sent," and have performed the holiest offices of the altar without the Lord's anointing; to "go out not knowing whither," and incur the necessity of long probation, before I may earn the confidence of my brethren in my new relations; to be day and night agitated and unhappy on a question, on which it would be imprudent to seek sympathy either in the ties about to be sundered, or in those about to be formed; to "go up to this Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there;" to feel *goaded on* by inexorable truth, to the fatal moment of proclaiming the change my mind has undergone; and, at last, under a pressure of conviction, which it would be unsafe longer to resist, and impossible ultimately to overcome, to take my new position, and yet to have not a doubt that I am right in taking it; this is a task that lays under exhausting tribute every resource and element of our frail nature. The patient investigations, and the sifting of reasons, the earnest longings for Divine guidance, and the searchings of heart; the wakeful nights and anxious days, wearing the spirits and corroding the health; now a determination to dismiss the

subject, as one of externals and not of essentials, or of order and not of faith ; now an effort to believe that it would be a lesser evil to continue, even at some hazard, in the old communion, than to suffer and to produce in others the necessary mischiefs of a change ; now a recurrence to old prejudices, a carping at the theory in some of its details, or in its practical and local workings, or a magnifying of some incidental circumstance, to divert the mind, or to embitter it against the new relation, or to satisfy it that on the whole the change would not be materially for the better ; now the suggestion, that many learned and devout men, " of whom the world was not worthy," have believed that Presbyterianism was a scriptural religion ; now the old feeling stealing over me, that my mother, who first brought me to Christ, and first taught me to pray, and who now " sleeps in Jesus," lived without blemish, and passed " the swellings of Jordan" without fear, in the faith which, *only as to its securities*, I am proposing to abandon ; and again, the recollection that my venerable father, now leaning with Jacob on his staff, is in the same religion waiting with the bright anticipations of a holy hope " until his change come ;" these are but some of the tumultuous tossings in the mind of the anxious inquirer. The happier child of the Church, who was " free-born," can scarcely conceive the tribute to be paid to old prejudices, old habits, old associations, old modes of thinking, and chiefly to the old pride of human nature, by one who would become " partaker of his liberty." In the words of one who purchased at great expense the freedom of Rome, when Rome was free — words which were appropriated by another, who long ago preceded me in this uneven path—" With a great sum obtained I this freedom."

A struggle like this may perhaps somewhat excuse the

enthusiasm, which those, who "from without" have found their way into the church, have now and then betrayed. My own enthusiasm, if any I have felt, I have endeavoured not to make offensive to my brethren, either old or new. I have chosen rather, under many provocations, to "keep silence even from good words," and to enjoy my liberty in quiet thankfulness to Him whose word hath made me free. Sometimes I have been questioned, and, it would almost appear, in the same spirit in which the man, twice unfortunate, if I may so say, unfortunate in having been born blind, and unfortunate in having received his sight, was persecuted with the questions, "What sayest thou? What did he unto thee? How opened he thine eyes?" And sometimes, "out of a good and honest heart," I have been asked to give "a reason of the hope that is in me." But from considerations that will readily occur to a discreet mind, I have felt it proper not to break the covenant with my lips. Time may however be now supposed to have sobered down the gushing impulses of the "new convert," and also to have in some measure healed the wound which only "the necessity laid upon me" could have induced me to inflict on those "with whom I once walked in company," and therefore, from motives which I know will be approved by Him, who alone has the power to discern, or the right to judge, I now venture to give a degree of form and permanence to a brief chapter from my own "experience."

I am but one among more than three hundred ministers, who, in this country alone, have, within a few years, been 'grafted again into the good olive tree,' from which, on the responsibility of our forefathers, we had in evil and violent times been "broken off." In reaching this result, there has doubtless been no little variety in the trials that we have each encountered; but it is reasonable to suppose that "as

the billows went over our soul and deep answered to deep," in the general features of our "experience" we have resembled each other, as "face answereth to face in a glass." And forasmuch as few have taken in hand to give account of those things which are most surely believed among us, and especially of "that dark and terrible wilderness" through which the Lord hath brought us to the fold that was once "one," and is as certainly to be one again, it has been suggested by others and has seemed good to me also, "having perfect understanding of that way," that it might be a means of usefulness, and perhaps a source of consolation, or even an humble guide to those who may come after us in the same rough path, or who may be at this moment, grappling with the same rude difficulties to see that "the fiery trial has happened" to others before them, and that a goodly "cloud of witnesses," still panting at the goal, are looking on them with affectionate sympathy, as they run the same race from which we are now resting, and have their eye on the same invaluable prize which we have grasped.

CHAPTER II.

TRADITION.

It was enough to attach my young heart to the Presbyterian religion, that my mother, besides possessing in a high degree the most amiable and striking virtues of her sex, was formed in that religion to an elevated piety ; that from her my mind has received those early religious inclinations which it can never lose ; and that her flesh was resting in unclouded hope of a blessed resurrection. True, I was a child too young to know the nature of my loss, when I lost my mother ; but never shall that mother's prayer pass away from my memory ; never shall her tear dry away from my sight ; never shall her hand be lifted from my brow, as she laid it there to bless me ; never shall I forget the pleasing task she assigned me, as the little bearer of her basket and its burdens at her side in her almsgiving visits to the poor ; never shall I lose from memory the little sanctuary, whither she often resorted with her child ; and whence her soul soared upward and taught mine to follow ; and, until death shall restore me to her, I shall feel her influence, and, for aught I know, enjoy the defence and succor of her spirit, hovering about me still. My venerable father, too, for half a century, had been a prudent and efficient minister of Presbyterianism ; had, in the phraseology of that school, " dedicated me in baptism," and admitted me when yet a child to " the ordinance of the Lord's Supper ;" had by much exertion expensively educated me ; and had laid on me his hands, imparting the commission to bless the people and to preach the gospel and administer the sacra-

ments as Presbyterians hold them. A few will find it in their hearts to censure me, if I shall here confess, that, when other and graver obstacles had given way before the force of truth, yet there remained this, which flesh and blood could not willingly profane, and found it no light matter to surmount; that the guide of my youth, now "old and well-stricken in years," might "go down with sorrow to the grave," if he should hear that his son had abjured the religion of his ancestors.

With that homage which parents such as mine seldom fail to command from their children, I could not for a moment doubt, so long as I yet "thought as a child, and understood as a child," that it was my duty to believe exactly as they had believed before me. And far be it from me to condemn this feeling, now that I have "become a man." If the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother" be imperative, He who scarcely takes things temporal into the account, can hardly be supposed to have forbidden us to honour them, by embracing and defending their religion. It is unquestionably the original design of Providence, that this instinctive, and therefore divinely implanted, veneration for our parents' faith; a wise and holy instinct, which Cain first violated and Esau next; should have its application, not only to the Church in her perfection, where the case suggests no difficulty; but also to those forms of religion, which, although we call them defective, we rejoice to hope may be radically Christian. Nor do we feel free to limit even here the application of the principle; but we believe it to be as truly, although less obviously, wise and salutary, even when employed in the transmission of the faith of the Mohammedan, or the Socinian, or the Pagan, or the Jew. For, if the children of such were not trained in the religion of their parents, they would grow

up to manhood without those ideas of accountability and retribution, which lie at the foundation of moral improvement and restraint. As we say of "the powers that be," that any government whatever is better than none, because its very existence affords a basis for progress and improvement; so we say that any religion whatever, Turk, Jew, or heathen, is unspeakably better than none, because it makes a creature of hope, and preserves the idea of accountability and law. Few, indeed, would be willing to see the experiment, if it could possibly be made, of severing the Mohammedan or Pagan from the teaching and religion of his parents, and of letting loose on earth whole nations of Africans, or Turks, or Hindoos, without the conception of a God or of a future life. I need not extend this reasoning to the Atheist, until the question be settled, whether there has ever been this monster among men destitute of the first fundamental instinct of humanity; and until the Atheist should be willing, which the pretended Atheist is never, to initiate his children into the arcana and the consequences of his faith.

As it is then the duty of the parent to hold his own religion infallible, until he shall have seen convincing proof of its fallaciousness, so is it equally the obligation of the child to hold as inviolable the religion of his parent; his best friend under heaven; one who would not "for bread give him a stone, nor for an egg a scorpion"—until he shall at the maturity of reason, have encountered *overwhelming* demonstration, or at least satisfactory proof, of some fatal flaw or falsehood in the system. And when Christians shall be again "of one mind and of one heart;" shall 'eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink;' shall acknowledge one baptism into one body, and with "one mouth" confess "one faith;" that faith shall be per-

petuated, as once it was, from sire to son, through the happy and unbroken ages of millennial blessedness, to which we are taught to look exultingly forward. And although this instinctive and inviolable rule of entailing a particular faith, may work inconveniently, and often disastrously, in these days, when there be creeds many, and baptisms many, yet it is not to be set aside, except for the most serious and weighty reasons, to be cautiously considered in each particular case; for "from the beginning it was not so;" and, in happier days to come, the working of this very rule shall bring it to pass, that "all thy children shall be taught of God," and an unsullied faith and worship shall be entailed from generation to generation. Thus it is, that the laws of nature, grace, and instinct, have all been intended to cover vast circles of time, and to accomplish a vast preponderance of good, and are not to be suspended on account of any local and short-lived inconveniences that may result. As the wind must breathe, and the sun go on, the lightning play, and the volcano continue to blaze, the rains descend, and the rivers flow, and the ocean roll, and all nature keep in motion, to accomplish vast beneficent results, regardless of the partial evils that here and there may incidentally occur; so, without the necessity of tracing out the parallel, must the laws ordained for our religious nature, whether they come from revelation or from instinct, be implicitly obeyed.

Nay, we go farther and assert, that while the religion of tradition is the only religion of which childhood is capable, it is, almost to an equal extent, the only religion that we receive in manhood. Not more incapable is the pious child of demonstrating that the adorable Jesus, at whose name he bows and in whose name he prays, is both God and man and must be God and man if He would lay his hand on both

and reconcile the two, than older Christians for the most part are incapable of settling the canon of Scripture, or of establishing the fact, that the Scriptures have been faithfully preserved in their original tongues, or have been duly rendered in the received translations ; although upon these facts, and others equally beyond their reach, they build the blessed hope of everlasting life.

Nay, this principle is one of still wider range. Our knowledge, on nearly all subjects, is the simple knowledge of tradition. The results in the whole circle of the sciences, and the facts of the whole field of literature, and the occurrences of every day life, are received on tradition, or the word of others. Thus the child at School is the passive recipient of traditions. He believes, not only in innumerable facts, and histories beyond his sphere of observation ; but he believes in facts, that his own observation would go far to contradict—that the earth is a sphere, although he sees it as a plane—and that the sun does not rise and set, although his eyes assure him that it does. He believes that an eclipse will occur to-morrow although he cannot understand the stupendous calculations that furnish the result ; he believes that there are a thousand countries, rivers, seas, and cities that he has never seen ; and every event anterior to his birth, and every fact of which he has not been personally witness, he must and does receive on the testimony of tradition. He who would receive nothing on tradition must be without ideas except as he acquires them in common with the brutes : carry the principle into religion, and he is an infidel and an Atheist. Unless we could have lived from the times of Christ, and through all the succeeding ages from the Apostles down, we could not so much as know, that we have the scriptures as they were then given to the Church.

When, therefore, I have said that mine was the faith of tradition; a tradition that I justly venerated, because it came from my parents to me, as it had done from theirs to them—but a tradition that I have since discovered to be not very venerable for its years—I do not repudiate, but mean most distinctly to sanction the principle; a principle, which, if from the first days of Christianity it had been, sacredly and without interruption, followed, would have found universal Christendom at this moment “of one heart and of one mind.”

But as we have often remarked, that persons who pretend to have discovered the defectiveness in all creeds and have made the high and flattering resolve to take *the Bible* as the expression of *their* faith, and with a sort of unwritten unsettled, elective and ever-varying creed, made up of shreds and patches from the creeds around them; or, as we have sometimes seen the teachers of religion, dissatisfied with all the existing churches, as though “the gates of hell” had equally prevailed against them all, broaching some new organization, or some inorganic spiritual brotherhood, which was presently, like Aaron’s rod, to swallow up all others, but which after gathering some “itching ears” around it, shortly became but another of the innumerable “churches,” that, like the dust of Egypt, are “found in all our borders;” so it is worthy of notice that greater practical sticklers for tradition, a tradition too of the most dangerous sort, the tradition of a mere yesterday, are nowhere to be found, than are every day met with, in the very churches and sects that declaim with lugubrious piety against it. And, as those teachers, who are constantly getting dissatisfied with all extant churches, or rather with those in which their own lot has fallen, and find something to complain of in them all, and profess to have left all

"sects;" sometimes with the preposterous dream that all will presently fall in with *them*; cannot for their lives perceive, that they are only setting up themselves another "sect," which will by and by be right glad to get into a corner, dignified with the recently repudiated name of "church;" or, as those pious souls, women not less than men, "seven women," it may be, "at the skirts of one man," who "have thrown away all human creeds," cannot for the life of them understand, that the result of their "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," has been to invent with overbearing positiveness a new human creed, perhaps unwritten, and all the more dangerous for that; so the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Quaker, the Sectarian in general, cannot at all perceive, that while professing to reject tradition, he is in fact the most rigid traditionist to be found on earth. The young Quakeress is compelled to swallow, as amicably as her years will allow her, the traditions of "mother Eunice and grandmother Lois," even to the gloss upon her hair, the shape of her bonnet, and the pinning of her shawl; and the Quaker boy comes up to manhood, with the traditions as he received them from his father, and the father from broad-brim ancestors before him, even to the curves and angles of his coat, and the wearing of his hat in meeting; while all the little ones preserve the traditions of the parents, even to the crucifying of the English tongue, in the everlasting jargon of thee-and-thou. In vain the boy remonstrates, "Why Father, *thee* is a pronoun of the second person, and in the objective case; and *commands* is a verb in the third person, requiring the nominative; yet *thee commands me* to violate the first rule of grammar." The father finds it quite satisfactory to answer, "What has grammar to do with religion? O, son, we live in degenerate times! Thee had a great deal better violate

a hundred rules of grammar, than one tradition of the Church." How fortunate it is for some religions, and especially for such as originated, and could have originated, only in a wild fanaticism, that there is such a thing as tradition! How long would Quakerism live without it?

The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, and all the host of them. Who, in times past, has more rigidly enforced traditions, creeds and catechisms on their children, than Presbyterians? For my own part, before I knew the difference between the nominative and the objective cases, I was a sincere believer "that the decrees of God are his eternal purpose, whereby, according to the counsel of his own will, he hath, for his own glory, foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." I never in my life met with but one consistent anti-traditionist; a good-natured Baptist preacher, who undertook to bring his children up unbiassed as well as unbaptized; that on coming to the years of discretion, they might-investigate the conflicting claims of the Shaster and the Bible, and choose between Confucius and Christ, to settle the triple crown, yet in dispute, between Pius the Fourth and Calvin the First. But the worthy man soon grew tired of his consistency, and the unbaptized urchins had hardly got into their teens, before he discovered that "bodily exercise profiteth a little," (see marginal reading,) and by such exercise as the saints of the middle ages called *Flagellantes* or whippers, practised for godly discipline, the good minister found it quite necessary and highly edifying to inoculate his boys with somewhat of the *virus* of tradition.

The truth is, that the religion of tradition is universal. We see it everywhere. The principle is never violated. The Mohammedan, of every sect; the Pagan, of every caste; the Papist, of every order; the Jew, of every shape

and form ; all equally with the true Catholic, transmit their religions in genealogical descent from sire to son, by a hereditary *sequitur*. And we repeat, that we find no fault with the principle on which this fact depends. We have seen good results from it already. And when the "glorious things that are spoken of Zion" shall "begin to come to pass," we look for it, by that prerogative whereby it now perpetuates both good and evil, to bequeath from age to age, in a millenium whose years no man can number, still "better things than these."

If then the abstract principle be so important, of what serious concern to every thoughtful parent must it be, to establish himself for his children's sake, in the current of a pure and safe and, if possible, unchangeable tradition ! Before I became a Churchman, I had become a parent ; and as I looked, first on the unruffled faces of my children, and then on the sea of clashing sects and creeds all claiming to be Christians ; to-day noisily and fiercely jostling each other, and to-morrow sinking into oblivion again ; now startling entire communities by the phenomena of a violent galvanic life, and lapsing once more as suddenly into silence and inertness ; oh, many is the sigh I have ejaculated for a heritage to leave them, that should give some promise that it would not pass away with "every wind of doctrine ;" and often have I felt a saddening, sickening of the heart, at the destiny that seemed inevitably to await them in a church, whose actual condition in this country, and whose history in every other, gave me little reason to hope, that, however pure in my day, it would continue to be so in theirs ; and out of the only church that seemed to possess the elements of perpetuity ; the only church that history had proven to be conservative of our holy faith ! Sad and still sadder grew my thoughts. I knew that if I should

live and die a Presbyterian, so in all human probability would they: whatever *Presbyterian* might come to mean hereafter; for I saw that it continually changed its meaning, and I had more than once in England been mistaken for a Unitarian, because I had announced myself a Presbyterian. In short, could I feel satisfied or justified, in that hour when the things of Christ and of his church, and of eternity and our immortal part, assume their just magnitude in the eyes of men, to leave these children to the mercies of a sect, four-fifths of which, as a future page of this narrative will show, have become already, and with amazing facility and concert, Arian, Socinian, Neologian, or Pantheistical; and the only pure remnant of which has, under my own eyes, abjured the exalted view once taken in her own Confessions, of the ministry and sacraments as essential to the preservation of the more essential faith, and is rapidly declining into cheerless, intellectual theories, and has been rent within my own brief memory into a hundred schisms? Should I not be better satisfied, when looking on my little ones for the last time in life, to commend them to the nursing of a Holy Mother, that would enforce only the simple and sufficient creeds, which preserved the church's unity, so long as unity existed; and that would protect and perpetuate those creeds by liturgies, possessing some mystericus charm whereby she binds her children from age to age in mutual and indissoluble union?

It may seem singular that this view of the subject should have occurred to me so forcibly. But, entertaining it, I could not hesitate: and with the instincts of parental love—though resolutely resisting, and scarcely conscious of, the slightest tendency toward that church myself—and at a moment when I fully expected to spend my own remaining days in a filial adherence to the communion in which

I was born ; seven years before I entered the church, I submitted my children, although " secretly for fear of the" synagogue and elders, to Episcopal baptism ; that *they* might hereafter the more readily glide into a church, which at this time I regarded as having no other advantages above " the fair daughters of the Reformation," than in her manifest and tried conservatism, by virtue chiefly of her noble and unalterable liturgy.

One design of relating this circumstance, has been to give the reader some just idea of the anxieties through which an inquirer must pass ; and to teach the unreflecting that a conversion to Episcopacy, in certain circumstances, is not likely to be the result of caprice, or of blind or sudden impulse. For myself, so long as stern conscience allowed me to remain a Presbyterian ; so long as my leanings toward Episcopacy involved, or appeared to involve, no fundamental principle, but were at the most suggestings of taste, policy, expediency, I was content to abide in the communion wherein I had been born. But knowing the difficulty and the danger of breaking asunder the tie that binds one to the religion of his childhood, I determined to make it easier for my children to glide out of the accidental religion of their father, into the church that he even then distinctly regarded, in the present state of the world and of human nature, to be sufficiently, and more than any other, and after ample trial, the conservator, amidst the world's changes and chances, of "*the faith once delivered to the saints.*" For the same reason, it was my determination, regardless of the inconveniences to myself from such a course, to recommend to them, in due time afterward, the religion in which by true-hearted clergymen of the Church of England I had caused them to be baptized.

And now the reader, having seen my children "received into the congregation of Christ's flock," will not be surprised to find the parent envying his children's lot, and, by more painful stages making progress, as he did for the seven following years—toward the same result.

CHAPTER III.

APOLOGY.

In my seventeenth year, I became a member of the theological seminary at Princeton; a village widely and justly renowned for its academical and theological learning. The Episcopal liturgy had probably, up to that time, never existed on the atmosphere, that lay in homogeneous repose, within a circumference of thirty miles. A priest all dressed in white, as one arisen from the grave of Popery, had never appeared to frighten the quiet villagers out of their propriety. The faces around us—the traditions around us—the very sepulchres around us—the strangers who came among us—the pious and venerated men, whose shoes we felt unworthy to bear, and under whose observant eye was passing, as we felt, our every thought—all were Presbyterian “after the most straitest sect.” And what was I, at sixteen years of age, that I should entertain a doubt, that the men, whom there it was our privilege to know and to revere, had sifted their facts, and considered well their premises, and reached by the most cautious reasoning their conclusions? To me it would have seemed little less than parricide to have resisted the direction they were giving to my mind.

Being of an inquisitive turn myself, I would have pursued a doubt on any important alleged fact, to any extremity. But being also in my mental bias, both happily and unhappily, confiding and disposed to faith, and having been educated strictly a traditionist, I must confess, whether to my discredit or not, that, during a residence of more than three years at the seminary, I swallowed every fact and

dogma as most wholesome truth, "asking no questions for conscience sake;" and, with a credulity that would have gained me laurels in a school of Loyola, I never for a moment doubted the essential truth of the prevailing system.

One exception I must briefly mark—as it is the key to much that is to follow in this narrative. I did, at one time, deeply doubt the lawfulness of infant baptism. The doubt did not last long; its consequences will last forever. A thorough investigation dispelled every shadow of misgivings that nature, revelation, and antiquity sustained the practice. But how to reconcile this fact with the popular idea of regeneration; or how it should be lawful to baptize an infant before it had given signs of a spiritual birth, when I was taught to believe that the very design of baptism was to proclaim that birth before men and angels; was a problem that haunted me, as the reader will see, both then and afterwards.

While my companions in study, either older in years, or more inquisitive, or less confiding than myself, were rash enough now and then to hint their dissent upon some point of merely metaphysical importance, there was certainly one subject on which no one ventured to suggest a doubt. During my long residence at that "school of the prophets," I am not able to say with a clear conscience, that I ever laid my eyes on a volume—a line—a syllable, in defence of Episcopacy. This may appear strange, but it is not inexcusable. Episcopacy came up of course among the conflicting forms of christianity, but was summarily disposed of, to make room for some more plausible or more important theme. Everything else "came into our assemblies," as "a man, with a gold ring, in goodly apparel," while Episcopacy stood there as "a poor man in vile raiment," or as a woman not distant of kin to "the mother

of abomination," and as an Episcopalian seemed in our limited horizon to be a *rara avis in terris*, and his sect unpopular and unimportant, and inevitably destined before the rising lights of Jerome and Augustine to melt like snow beneath concentric suns, or doomed more certainly, should it prove more obstinate, to be ridden over rough-shod by a more popular religion; and as we felt also sure that it could never thrive in a republic, we agreed that it was sufficiently honoured in receiving at our hands the little notice that it got. "The sect is a small part of the christian world. In this land it is and will continue to be among the smallest of the tribes of Israel; its numbers are few in comparison with those of other denominations; its ministers are also comparatively few, and in point of talent, learning, piety and moral worth, not eminent above all others. . . .—It is at variance with the spirit of this age and of this land. This is an age of freedom, and men *will* be free. The religion of forms is not adapted to the free movement, the enlarged views, the varying plans of this age. It makes a jar on American feelings. *It will not be tolerated by this community.*" So says Mr. Barnes, the serenity of whose dreams has been disturbed, if we are rightly informed, by the tumbling of this barley-cake into the hosts that lie round about as grasshoppers, smiting in its progress his own particular tent on Washington Square, and eliciting more than once, in that unanswered *ad hominem* of his to "the evangelical party in the Episcopal church," the lamentation, that "Episcopalians are everywhere endeavouring to win [we should have said, *are every where winning*,] the young from the churches of their fathers."

Although I was, and may say it without boasting, to an intense degree, a student, and my lamp at night often the

last to be extinguished ; and though, in the various departments of study, I was "not a whit behind the chiefest" of my companions, in giving satisfaction to my teachers, as their own obliging testimonials may show ; yet one who has any knowledge of seminary life, or of the endless range of theological investigation ; or one who has ever seen how impetuously the student must be hurried forward from one topic to another, without the possibility of pausing ; will readily understand how it may have happened, that one young as myself ; the youngest of a hundred and twenty brethren ; should not have employed his time in pouring over the defences of a religion, which seemed then to have scarcely an existence in the land, and which it appeared impossible that the republican should tolerate, or the formalist himself be able long to endure, and which "the spiritually-minded," even among Episcopalians, would by and by instinctively and loathingly repudiate. By referring to copious notes of lectures, which I had a facility of taking with great accuracy, I observe that we were employed from December the twenty-seventh to the seventeenth of January on the topics in question ; that is, deducting the portion of this interval allotted to other duties, we were employed upon Episcopacy altogether, about *three days of continuous time*. How had we the opportunity to dwell on this silly question of "the washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels," in the space of three weeks, when all the other, and to us higher departments of study, were at the same time hungrily pressing upon our attention with the expectation that we should be equally proficient in them all ?

Neither did I lay down Episcopacy, as I did most other subjects, with the intention of a deliberate investigation at some future time ; but grudging it the little notice it had

got, among what seemed to be "the weightier matters of the law," and fastening tenaciously upon several facts or points, which, if their verity might be depended on, were certainly enough to silence all the Episcopal batteries in creation—and I was not one to question the accuracy of traditions from these, who, to me, "sat in Moses' seat,"—I laid the subject down, supposing, that in parting with it here, I had done with it for ever.

Besides this routine of study, which allowed us scarcely respite for our daily meals, the "revivals of religion," that broke out at the time in every section of the Presbyterian Church; exhibiting a wonderful mixture of good and evil, and accompanied by unusual and strange developments; were enough, with a temperament less ardent than mine, to absorb one class of energies and sympathies; while the theological disputes, that like a desolating flood were swelling in every direction to a most formidable height, and which resulted a little later in violent disruptions and in the addition of another large batch of sects to the already portentous list, were sufficient to engross the leisure moments of a young divine, in whose eyes, unread in history and unused to such phenomena, "the ends of the world had come upon us," and heaven and earth were mingling in the strife.

I permit myself to give prominence to these facts, as an apology (I am compelled to use the word,) for these, who have come out of the Babel—let me not call it Babylon—of sects and schisms, into the quiet home provided by the Church. Recantation is never a pleasing task. Even on the side of truth or goodness, it has its bleeding sacrifices. And we think that we lighten the harsh terms of penance to which we are condemned, by thus accounting for our having once conscientiously held opinions that we now con-

scientifically tepudiate. If we had held our opinions on the Episcopal claim, believing it to be a subject of grave importance; or, if we had adopted them in circumstances that had allowed a fair opportunity for investigation; we should not have deserved the indulgence that we now presume to ask. But, so long as we regarded it as a question of the very least importance, the other engrossing topics of inquiry did not, either *de merito* or *de facto* allow us to pause.

It is but fair that this should be borne in mind, that we may be spared the objurgations which we sometimes hear as though, in a moment of caprice, we had changed well-formed opinions, and might possibly hereafter change again; as though the vibration that brought us into Episcopacy, might, some day swing with us into Popery, or back again on the other side, to a position farther from the central truth than we were before. And yet among the Three Hundred Ministers to whom I have alluded, and among the thousand and thousand late lay converts to Episcopacy, I have never known of any such relapse, except of a Baptist in a recent instance in Ohio. I have known Episcopalians, baptized and educated in the Church, although I must suspect not educated on church principles, to make the said transitions to Romanism and Dissent; but, personally, I do not know an individual, denied a birth and training in the church, and who has come to "this Mount Zion" at his peril, that has afterwards lapsed into either of these errors. That such cases exist, we believe on the testimony of an excellent Bishop who has "taken pains to inquire," and has proclaimed the fact; and that such cases would exist, we should have thought not at all unlikely, especially if, of every two hundred and eighty-five persons ordained in the Church, as was the case under Bishop Griswold, of Massachusetts, two hundred and seven are from

other denominations ; and if, as some have computed, two thirds at least of the Episcopal clergy throughout the land, were once dissenters by their baptism or their education.* For, without undertaking to extenuate their error, or wishing to become the apologist for these mistaken brethren, let us not use this sword against them, lest even in a bishop's hands, we find it a two-edged blade, that may wound in a different quarter from the one intended.

For, to tell the plain truth, the convert from sectarianism, whose conversion has been one of either his head or his heart, may well feel disappointed at finding the practical condition of the Church so vitally at variance with its theories. His conversion has been the result of long inquiry and anxious struggles. He has been converted to Christianity as expounded by the Prayer-Book—a theory symmetrical, sublime, satisfactory. He has had little op-

* "It is a curious fact," says Bishop De Lancey, in a Conventional Address, which has appeared in a number of our Church papers, "that as far as I can learn, most all the clerical seceders in this country, from the Church to Romanism, have been originally educated and trained in bodies not Protestant Episcopal. The following is the result of my enquiries on the subject :—

CLERGYMEN.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Dioceses..</i>	<i>Date of Defection.</i>	<i>Brought up as</i>
Rev. Virgil H. Barber, jun.	N w York ..	1815..	Congregationalist.
" Virgil H. Barber, sen.	Connecticut.	1815..	Congregationalist.
" John Kewley.....	New York ..	1816..	Methodist.
" Pierce Conolly	Mississippi ..	1836..	Presbyterian.
" J. Roosevelt Bayley..	New York ..	1842..	Episcopalian.
" Henry Major.....	Pennsylvania	1846..	Methodist.
" Nathaniel A. Hewitt	Maryland ...	1846..	Congregationalist.
" Edgar P Wadhams..	New York ..	1846..	Presbyterian.
" William H. Hoyt....	Vermont....	1846..	Congregationalist.

Candidates for Orders.

Mr. Clarence Walworth ..	W. New York	1845..	Presbyterian.
" Benjn. J. McMasters..	New York..	1845..	Ref Scotch Pres.
" ——— Putnam	Nor. Carolina	1845..	Congregationalist.

To this statement of the Bishop I beg most respectfully to add, that "as far as I can learn," but one of the twelve apostates here

portunity to discover the practical Puritanism that has reduced the church at so many points to a level, and into feeble and fruitless competition, with the sects around her; and can we wonder that when he finds himself in the church, still hampered and harrassed by the same teachings, practices, and spirit, that he had imagined had been left forever behind him, he should in a moment of unlooked-for disappointment, throw himself with a desperation analogous to that of the weak-minded suicide, disappointed in the ideal object of his admiration and his love, into the arms of a more conservative system; conservative, although it be of error and wrong, as well as of truth and right? If the Church were actually the Church held up to the world in her Prayer-Book and in the writings of her great divines, the men who have thus been driven to a desperate deed, would more probably have been ready to lay down their lives in her and for her. We may be allowed to say, therefore, that we have felt it to be somewhat unkind, when one of these converts has happened to do something not quite churchmanlike, to attribute the error to a *residuum* of the old leaven; while the eyes of the veriest neophyte could see that the same errors, or errors still greater, and

named, was ever a dissenting minister; and that one was the Rev. Mr. Kewley, who, having been baptised in the Church, was in boyhood seduced by the Jesuits from his parents in England, and was educated at St. Omer's in France (his parents not knowing where he was), but only receiving anonymous assurances that he was doing well the while), and, after a stealthy escape to England, became a Protestant and a Methodist minister. On coming to America, he entered the Church, and became Rector of St. George's parish, in New York city, which he afterwards resigned, shortly following this step by his return to Europe and to the Romish communion. Moreover, without being at much pains to enquire, we ascertain that the Church-born apostates to Rome in this country bear quite their proportion to the above lists among the clergy, and that in England the proportion is beyond comparison greater. Our only object is to check these unnecessary and invidious distinctions, and that for no other reason than that they seem to us likely to check the progress, as they contradict the spirit, of a Catholic-hearted Church.

departures still more serious from the canons, liturgy, principles, and spirit of the church, were more numerous and more strikingly perpetrated by those whose better fortune should have taught them better manners toward their lawful mother.

It has been the occasion of satire to the Sectarian, and of pleasantries even to the Churchman, that the professed convert to the church of God should betray any earnestness in the cause, which he has at such peril espoused. For myself, although the feeling has never been officiously or offensively obtruded, because it has never been obtruded at all, upon the notice of others, and has been sometimes even studiously repressed, yet I am not ashamed to plead guilty to that sense of holy satisfaction, which only a great sacrifice to conscience can impart; and of gratitude, which only a great benefit conferred, can enkindle; and of comfort, which only a blessing long desired, and inestimable in itself, can bring; and, for one, I am content to put my hand while living, to the sentiment which a noble son and father of our Church inscribed on all his actions, and again, for the thousandth and the last time, subscribed, with his dying hand, *Pro Ecclesia Dei! Pro Ecclesia Dei!* My answer to the dissenter is, Who but a Churchman, that has tasted the quiet delights of the sanctuary, can appreciate the church's excellence? My vindication to the Churchman is, Who but the soul that has been "tossed up and down like a locust," upon "the winds of doctrine" and the sea of sects, can understand the mazes, the dangers, the undercurrents, and the disasters, of Sectarianism? Sectarians, you know nothing of the church's blessings! Churchmen, you know nothing of Sectarianism's mischiefs!

The young churchman, as a theological student, has this

advantage over the sectarian ; that, besides his being tutored to a system better adapted to bind its sons in loyal attachment to itself, the subject of church order, in his course of study, is so prominently kept before his mind, and so assiduously followed out in its bearings, that he acts earlier in life under a clearer apprehension of the subject ; and, if he have been but moderately attentive to the question in dispute, is not very likely to retract the results at which he has arrived. But it is right to recollect, that the case of the Sectarian is otherwise. His course of study is assigned, and every hour of his time so filled, as nearly to exclude, and certainly to force into a corner, the whole question of Episcopacy, and the still more vital questions, liturgical, catholic, and sacramental, that with the Episcopacy, as all experience teaches, are to stand or fall. Hence the phenomenon, arguing indirectly, but conclusively, for Episcopacy, that, in face of the outcry and the odious nicknames of the day, invented to arrest the wholesome reaction, hundreds of dissenting teachers, in England as well as in America, and thousands of their followers, are flocking back to the ark, from which, in an evil hour, they went out, seeking rest upon a turbulent and dangerous sea ; and that in this country alone, within the memory of man, Three Hundred Ministers, with a corresponding number of adherents, have returned to the ancient fold !

If I may repeat what seems to be the only explanation of this fact, it is, that the Church student is in little danger of meeting with new suggestions upon church polity ; whereas, the dissenting minister is in continual peril of encountering new facts, or the refutation of the facts on which he has been accustomed to rely. And this defection from sectarianism must continue to annoy our "separated brethren," so long as the high prerogative of the

Church, as the visible Body of Christ, witnessing His Word, perpetuating His Presence, and imparting His Forgiveness and His Grace, shall continue to be "privily thrust out." Let it also be remembered, that in subsequent life, the pressure of domestic avocations, the limited access to books, the *res angusta domi*, and the absorbing nature of parochial engagements, as effectually exclude it from the attention of the student, when promoted to the pastoral life: so that nothing but a seeming accident, or the ill-working of an intolerable system, is likely, in the first instance, to rouse his inquiries, or send him to the tomes of the Fathers and the fountain-heads of information.

Because these facts have not been allowed a hearing, the "new convert" has been regarded sometimes with a certain feeling of distrust; and attempts, that look like playing back into the hands of Dissenters, have been made, to make the period of probation, for those who have been dissenting ministers, so burthensome, as effectually to exclude them from the priesthood of the Church. We might be led into some curious speculations, were we to pry into the motives for these attempts. It is, that the Church, so lax in her discipline at other points, wishes to be understood as taking the high ground, that we have committed some sin almost unpardonable in having been dissenting teachers? Or may it be, that in the judgment of some, we have perpetrated a most damning sin in abjuring communions, which are in their opinion, on all vital points, as much churches of Christ as the one we seek? Have you ever known one in a hundred of these converts from sectarianism, to return to his "first love?" Have you ever known one of them to apostatize to Rome, except in sadness and bitterness, at finding the living Church so flattered by its portrait in the Prayer-Book, and by the pencils of her masters? Are they

not in general, as firm, and filial, and obedient sons, though "coming from far," as those that have been "nursed at her side," and as "able to give a reason of the hope that is in them?" But I mean not to argue. Take away those ministers at her altars who have been baptized or educated in dissent, and the Church in America will be left a widow indeed, with but little if anything more than her thirds for her portion.

Right sorry am I to tell it in this place, that there are quarters, in which the unchurchmanlike, unscriptural, unchristian, uncatholic, and behind-the-age sentiment is familiarly uttered, that you would rather these dissenters should remain where they are! Remain where they are! I confess I do not understand you. Remain where they are! Is your Church the living representative of Christ on earth, and you would rather they should not be baptized into that body, and derive through it, "by that which every joint supplieth," their nourishment and growth unto everlasting life? You pray incessantly, "Thy kingdom come," and yet you are startled at the first shaking of the dry bones, around you! You say that your Church is destined to absorb all others, and yet, the moment the bright result begins to dawn, and wake you from your slumbers, you deprecate the spreading light, and cry, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep!"

I speak not for myself. For myself I have nothing to ask. I have not found the Church the step-mother that my former friends predicted, and my own fears foreboded. I have found fathers among her elders; and among her sons I have found brothers; and from her breasts I have drawn consolations, for the sacrifices I have made. Yet I remember the words of a judicious writer, that "men are but men, what room soever among men they hold." Nor do I forget

the words of a friend, dropped by the way-side, a few hours before I received the grace of holy orders, that "you will find human nature in the Church, as well as out of it; you must expect to meet everywhere with narrow minds and pent-up hearts." To which I have only to add, that the mere fact of our abandoning systems, that some within the Church regard with so much tenderness, may in some instances subject us to the mistrusting glance, as it is an awkward thing to be explained by those who at the Church's altars act as the apologist of dissent and schism, and over the Church's walls reach down the *left* hand of fellowship to "the brethren without."

My remarks look to the future, and, at the risk of incurring the rebuke, that "this one fellow came in to sojourn, and will needs be a judge," I cannot but confess, that it would be painful to see the Church—free as it is, and free as it ought to be preserved—legislating herself out of her own liberties, and inventing new and unnecessary hindrances to the enlargement of her borders. "Much land remains to you to be possessed." "The field is the world." If the dissenting teacher, applying for her orders, is not qualified for the responsibilities that they impose, then, though he be as old as Methuselah, use the Church's prerogative, and bid him away. But if he be ready with "the answer of a good conscience," then take all that come to you—for alas! you have room for all—and ordain them, though they be young as Timothy, and though, like his, their fathers have been "Greek." "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Take the word of one, whose word in the present case may not go for nought, that you need inflict no greater penance, than that which these men have suffered, in crossing "the great gulf fixed" between them and you. What is the policy of Rome?

What the policy of the Dissenter? *Fas est ab hoste doceri*—freely translated—*learn a lesson from your neighbours*. In days like these, when those who come to you must forsake the popular for the unpopular—must stem a breast-deep tide to reach you—must leave an unburied father, or an offended house, to follow you—must wear in no mean sense a crown of suffering and one of which for Christ's sake they are not ashamed—receive, as did Paul and Peter, all that come to you. Although, like Timothy, without our fault, we may not have been “of Israel, according to the flesh,” yet “from a child we have known the Holy Scriptures,” and have loved, “though half in the speech of Ashdod,” the faith that dwelt aforetime in our mothers and our grandmothers.

Only let the Bishops see, that ministers from other communions, seeking orders in the Church, leave no room for the suspicions that *cælum, non animam mutant*; and the Church may safely throw open her door. Her walls, the world over, and the world knows, are strong enough, and high enough: and if her gates be needlessly obstructed, those who would have entered, will go away wondering at the “grievous burdens” that your own scribes and lawyers “would not touch with one of their fingers.” It was a fearful accusation, “Them that were entering in ye hindred.” Let the Church, that we believe to be “after the pattern of heavenly things,” assert her prerogative, as “the mother of all living,” and “travail,” like her apostles, “the second time” for her disaffected children, and do nothing to deserve the reproachful name that sectarians have given her, and with which, if my own experience may testify, they seek to deter their adherents from her bosom, as a *noverca injusta*.

I am not ignorant of the discipline of the primitive

Church toward those who returned to her from heresy and schism. Perhaps it is unfortunate that that discipline has been interrupted. But were it even in force, we might still without presumption remind you, that we were sectarians by tradition, and not by election; that few of us ever rejected any article of the Catholic Faith, as it is expressed in the ancient creeds; and that in encountering all the inconveniences and hardships of a conversion, we have done a penance that should satisfy the Church, and at which a Hindoo breaking *caste* would justly marvel.

Perhaps few would be more ready than myself to bode danger from a sudden influx into the Church. I have seen disastrous consequences from the letting loose of Congregationalists into the Presbyterian communion—taking it by surprise, and cutting it adrift from its ancient moorings.—It is notorious that her doctors have recently descended not only to Congregational mitigations of her faith, but to Congregational grounds in her defence—resorting, if I may give an example of recent and memorable date, to the silly hypothesis, urged formerly by Congregationalists against themselves, of a crew of Christians cast without the ministry and sacraments upon a desert island. And I know, that, when it was remarked in a circle of New School Divines, a few years ago, that a number of New England ministers were going into the Episcopal Church, a Congregational Doctor of Divinity, fresh from Ohio, replied, “I am glad of it; they will revolutionize the Episcopal Church, as we have done the Presbyterian.” And it may be, that now and then an adventurer may make his way into the Church, from carnal or mercenary motives, (although, where Dissent is “fat and well-liking” in the land, this can hardly be conceived,) and such to their new spouse may be forever commending and canonizing their first love. It may even

be, that the Cincinnati Divine has not been entirely disappointed, in seeing here and there the revolutionary hand at work. But let it be remembered, that the gliding from one sect to another, is a very different thing from a submission to the Church. In one you cross the street; in the other, a great gulf. One is a *caprice*; the other a *conversion*. Besides, I need not remind the Episcopalian, that Episcopacy has *guards*, which Presbytery has not—that Episcopacy has *claims*, which Presbytery has not—that Episcopacy has *promises*, which Presbytery has not—that Episcopacy has a *destiny*, which Presbytery has not—a destiny as Catholic as the family of man—a destiny which she must inevitably fulfil, and can fulfil only by conversions as thick strown as “the drops of the morning dew.” Either you must give up your high-sounding claim to be the Church of God, or every conversion must fill your heart with joy. Either you must not look for her future universality, and consequently must at once surrender her pretensions, and leave the undisputed field to Rome: or, like Rome, you must keep vigils for her straitness, and jubilees for her extension. Leave not these waters teeming with living myriads, to the Roman fisherman, who will let down his net at the master’s bidding, not fearing, like you, that “for the multitude of the fishes” *his* net will “break.” Be ye not so like the brother in the field, who “was angry, and would not go in.” “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found.”

CHAPTER IV.

PRINCETON.

Between the years 1830 and 1840, on the deck of a steamboat between the cities of Washington and Alexandria, I remember to have met, for the first and only time in my life, with the Reverend Mr.———, an Episcopal clergyman, and one of three brothers "according to the flesh," who had themselves, as I was afterward informed, come "from without" into the Church. It so happened, in the course of conversation, that this gentleman made some allusion to the hurried notice taken of the subject of Episcopacy in certain theological schools, and hinted broadly that this was very much the case at Princeton.—I do not recollect the reply that his remarks elicited, or whether I did not let them fall unnoticed into the Potomac; but I have not forgotten the indignation that burned in my young heart, at what I regarded as an unmanly and unfounded imputation upon my church, my alma mater, and myself.

Fortunately for me too, a few weeks before, on making my ministerial debut in the first Presbyterian Church in Washington, in the presence of President, Senators, and Rulers of the nation, the minister who "made" what is oddly but aptly termed "the long prayer," that is, the prayer before the sermon, thought proper to introduce me to his *audience* as "thy servant not yet nineteen years of age." For although it was an extemporaneous error of more than a year, and intended to flatter the vanity of a *debutant*, still, by not allowing me to forget that I was yet a boy, it may have done me service in restraining me,

on this occasion, from giving utterance to a feeling like this: "Sir! art thou a teacher in Israel, and knowest not yet the difference between the Gospel and the Church; between externals and essentials; between the casket and the jewels; between the net and the fishes; between the shell and the kernel; between the spirit and the body;—between the chaff and the wheat; between the mere scaffolding and the glorious building?" And certainly, on this occasion, "discretion was the better part of valor;" for had the young bachelor in divinity given way to his pugilistic impulses, he might have been sadly puzzled; nay, I may fear, muzzled; if the excellent clergyman had, in his mild way replied; "My dear young friend—you will excuse me for reminding you again that you are young—would you deposit a jewel in a frail casket without a fastening? Would you expect to see the kernel come to maturity, if you should rend to tatters the protecting shell? Would you think to detain on earth the spirit of one you loved, if you should neglect or divide the body it inhabited? Would you, with a weak and broken net, expect, in all weathers and in all waters, to drag your fishes to the shore? Would you tear off the "useless chaff" that God has thrown around the grain, and hope, when the sickle should be thrust in, to fill your garner with the wheat? Would you throw down the scaffolding, and expect to see the temple rear its bright pinnacles toward the sky? The jewel would perish without the casket, and the kernel without the shell; the life would depart but for the body, and the fishes be lost but for the integrity of the net; the wheat would die but for the chaff, the temple never rise but for the scaffolding, and the gospel pass away from the hearts of men but for the Church, its channel and its witness. You must, then, my young friend, find other

similitudes from the objects around us to support your theory. Ask nature. Does she furnish the analogies you want?" But fortunately for the reputation of Princeton, as represented in her youthful graduate, I did not lay myself open to the annihilation to which this would have been but the playful prologue.

Although the clergyman thus encountered was justified in the allegation, that the time allotted to the subject of Episcopacy, in certain schools, is unreasonably short; for, if I mistake not, he had been himself a pupil at Princeton, and now only "testified what he had seen;" yet the young graduate flatters himself into the consciousness that he is amply mailed and equipped to confront a universe of mitres, and all the ingenuity and learning of the heads that wear them. As we made our rapid transit over the ground, my own mind fastened distinctly upon what appeared to be its more plausible pretensions, and at the same time upon what promised to be the annihilating sources of attack.—Contenting myself with these leading and, as I thought, strong positions, which I shall presently enumerate, I was the subject of a mental process, resting strictly on tradition and fairly reducible to the following syllogism:

If what our Lecturer has drawn from the records of antiquity be true, Episcopacy is a fraud.

What our Lecturer has drawn from the records of antiquity is true by every guarantee of honesty, learning and piety:

Ergo, Episcopacy is a fraud.

Or thus:

Facts must settle this question:

Our Professor has given us the facts:

The question is therefore settled.

The nature of the facts on which my young mind had

seized, and on which it had as undaunted influence, as had the Hebrew stripling in "the smooth stones from the brook," may be inferred from the following examples, which I shall repeat in the form in which, for the most part, they were at that time presented to my imagination.

I. Episcopacy is, in its structure, anti-republican, and in its spirit, hostile to human liberty ; in the pleasant places where our lot is fallen, we need not therefore fear its progress, nor concern ourselves about it.

II. It is now conceded, that the official names of Bishop and Presbyter in the New Testament are of the same exact meaning ; therefore all Presbyters, or, which is the same thing, all Pastors are Bishops, and the setting of Bishops above Presbyters or Pastors is a usurpation and an anti-Christ.

III. The Apostles were but twelve, and their number was no more intended to be increased than that of the twelve tribes or the twelve constellations. The apostles saw the Lord, whom their pretended successors have not seen ; the apostles wrought miracles, which their pretended successors cannot show : the apostles possessed individually the gift of inspiration, which their pretended successors, unless indirectly or collectively, do not even claim ; therefore their pretended successors are *Apostati*, non *Apostoli* ; *Seductores*, non *Doctores* ; *Pilati*, non *Prelati*—not Apostles, but apostates ; not Doctors, but seductors ; not prelates, but Pilates !

IV. Hilary declares that "In Egypt, even at this day [say, the end of the fourth century,] the Presbyters ordain in the Bishop's absence ;" and Jerome a writer of unbounded learning, declares that Episcopacy was introduced "by degrees" into the Church ; that at Alexandria even in his day, "not only the election, but the ordination of the

Bishops was by the Presbyters themselves," and demands exultingly of the proud Bishop of Rome, "What *does* a Bishop, ordination excepted, that a Presbyter may not do?" in other words, "what prerogative has a Bishop, ordination excepted, that a Presbyter has not?"

These will answer for specimens of the positions, on which, as a graduate in this department, I relied for all future emergencies; and these, together with a few other quotations from the Fathers to save appearances, and especially a modest remark of the great Bishop of Hippo respecting his order, extracted, by a more searching process than is known in alchymy, from the fifteen huge folios of Saint Augustine: and also, the marvellous tradition we were taught, that "there is not one word in favor of Episcopacy to be found in the writings of the Fathers for the first three centuries;" and that, if there were, "the Fathers are not to be trusted," and their records are no better than "old wives' fables;" constituted the stripling's armor, as he came forth to meet "this uncircumcised Philistine." The Episcopal reader will readily understand the process, by which my mind was enabled afterward to perceive the irrelevancy or the inconclusiveness of these and the like assumptions; and the reader to whom it may appear strange that they should ever have lost with me their force, may have his curiosity gratified, by accompanying me a little farther in the story.

But those who are curious to remark such things, will see that I was all this while a Presbyterian *by tradition*, believing with a loyalist's—I might almost write it, *Loyalist's* implicitness in the historical infallibility of my manuals and doctors. As yet I had neither the motive nor the time to call in question these traditions, on a subject, as it seemed then to be, of infinitely secondary moment—

the veriest "tithing of mint and anise and cummin;" and the sea of Presbyterian faces, lecturers, doctors, books, and temples, spreading to the horizon which my eye commanded, was hardly likely to disturb my confidence.

While in England, Episcopacy appeared to retain its footing by the argument of the sword and of a grinding aristocracy, in America it appeared to us to be breathing out a sickly existence, with scarcely a place of promise for its sepulchre, or any to "sing or say" its own burial service over it, when it should die. In some way or other, I got over the ground at Princeton, without knowing the causes that had held back the Episcopal Church from its destiny upon this continent, or the sorrowful fact, that from Massachusetts Bay to the Gulf of Florida, it was by friend and foe bound hand and foot, and systematically and preservingly degraded to that miserable state, from which the wonder is, that it ever revived, or outlived the crisis of national independence. Although I knew that the solemn legislation of Connecticut made it *death* for a priest to be seen, after the first warning, within the settlements, yet I was not aware of the untiring and successful resistance, in the other colonies, to the introduction of the Episcopate into this land, whenever the attempt was made, and even when a Queen's bounty at one time, and private munificence at others, had furnished ample securities for its support. Soon after the Restoration, Dr Murray was actually appointed the Bishop for Virginia, but the measure was defeated by the joint agency of Erastian indifference and Puritanical remonstrance. Again, forty years after, in 1704, the clergy in this country unanimously urged the like step on the attention of the English government, and, to avoid the odium of taxation, offered a tenth of their own substance to meet the expense. Again, about eight years

after, in the reign of Queen Anne, and without oppression to any of her subjects, a fund was actually provided, by the sale of wild lands in the West Indies, for the maintenance of the Episcopate at four different points in the American colonies, where it would have been most cordially received; but the death of the Queen and a change of government, gave fresh opportunity for the opponents of the Church to keep her under foot. Again, in 1713, the venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—a Society still prosecuting its ancient work with the wisdom and dignity of age, and the ardor and energy of youth—purchased at Burlington (the very spot now redeemed by the exertions of a noble Prelate to the church) a house and glebe for a Bishop's residence. Within the twenty years following, not only the living but the dying "wept when they remembered Zion" in America, and frequent donations and legacies from hands in England that would have reached that Zion if they could, and hearts that "it pitied to see her in the dust," from persons known and unknown, from male and female, from the humble layman to the highest dignitary of the church, continued to swell the fund, and invite the extension of the Episcopate to the American colonies. But Government was deaf. And it was jealous. And it had troubles at home. And the age was an age of indifference, such as experience has now taught us to look for, after a long prevalence of noise and cant, attended, as they usually are, and as they were with the English Puritans, by animosity and violence. In short, the Puritans and the Presbyterians would not allow it; and they then held the balance of power.

A hundred and thirty years it was, after Dr. Murray was nominated Bishop for Virginia, that Samuel Seabury—a name impossible to speak, without associating it with the

purest and brightest that have been "written in heaven"—was sent forth the first apostle to America. For nearly two centuries had the Church in this land travail and sorrow, before her first Bishop was born. In vain did she pray to be delivered. The marvel is, that she did not, as it was intended, perish in the crisis. And now the children of those very Puritans have the courage, or it may be in their case, as it was in mine, the ignorance, to challenge this recurrence to the past, by turning the late, or if you please the present condition of our Church to our reproach. "Among the least," says Mr. Barnes, "of the tribes of Israel." Be it so. "As for this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." Not in the British Parliament alone, are Romanist and Protestant combined against her, and "Herod and Pilate made friends together."—"Among the least of the tribes of Israel!" So was Bethlehem-Ephratah, "little among the thousands of Judah," yet the wise men, and even the shepherds of flocks, got to hear how the Lord had made it beautiful with his presence, and found their way to, and knelt in humble adoration in its dust. "Among the least of the tribes of Israel," says a Presbyterian; "Christianity was born in a manger," said a parishioner of mine, the son of a Presbyterian, "and ought to be kept there." Go a little further, I replied, and say, "she was once nailed to the cross, and ought to be kept *there*." Nearly two centuries was the Church down-trodden in this land; none to administer her discipline; her sacramental character obscured, and one-third of her pious sons, who were forced away to England for ordination, deterred from returning, or dying from the hardships of the voyage. Nor was the Church emancipated, or a Bishop allowed at her altars, until the drums of the revolution roused in her unwilling heart, at last, a sense of this injus-

tice, and some of her very priests went girded to the field, and, with her own Washington at the head of the continental army, and her own White as chaplain to the continental Congress, she became forever free.

But, to return from this apology for the depressed condition of our Church, as the present generation has seen it in the United States: in England, as I have said, quite ignorant of the almost universal hold that the Church has there on the affections of the people, we were led to think that it retained its footing rather by the argument of the sword, and of an overawing aristocracy. Nor did it then occur to me, that it might be perhaps the conservative character of her religion, that had put into her hand that "glittering spear," and had given such power to her aristocracy, imposing upon Europe the hatred policy—*Pacem cum Anglo, bellum cum reliquis*. Of the Greek and Oriental Churches I had scarcely heard. Rome was not to be taken into the account, and the whole world of orthodoxy, piety and common sense, seemed, in my youthful and honest eyes, to be Protestant and Presbyterian. The little island of Great Britain was accidentally Episcopal and liturgical—the universe beside, both earth and heaven was anti-liturgical and Presbyterian. "Why are you forever preaching against Bishops?" said a dissatisfied hearer to a Presbyterian divine. "Because," was the prompt reply, "I always find it in the text." "Well, I will give you a text where you will not find it; Genesis, first chapter, first verse." Accordingly the next Sunday the preacher began—"The Book of Genesis, the first chapter, at the first verse—'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,'—but not one word, my brethren, of his creating Bishops."

To speak plainly and honestly, Episcopacy was, in our

estimation, a religion for masters and their slaves; but Presbytery for the free; Episcopacy for such as would be startled at the question, "Canst thou speak Greek?" and are therefore without the means of knowing that "Bishop and Presbyter are titles of the same import in the New Testament;" and Presbytery for those who can establish the synonymes in Greek, and *translate* Jerome, Chrysostom Augustine, and even Clemens and Ignatius, by the hair of the head, over to the side of Presbyterianism: Episcopacy for men who must have books to tell them what to pray for; Presbytery for such as can get this information from their hearts: Episcopacy for "sentimental formalists and priestly drones," as a late writer in Connecticut has called them, who cannot be spurred by the warmth of an emotion or by the abundance of the theme, to swell their sermons beyond twenty minutes; and Presbyterianism for men, whose feelings can warm with their themes, and whose discourses bid defiance to hour: Episcopacy for such as loiter in the cool shade, and beneath the ripe clusters of the vineyards; but Presbytery for laborers, who "bear the heat and burden of the day;" Episcopacy for those who would cling to the stereotypes of the past; Presbytery for those who can adapt, and modify, and change, as often as the times and the tide require: Episcopacy for intolerably plain and prosy preachers, dwelling continually on the tame maxims of morals and religion; Presbytery for ministers who can rise, and carry their flocks up with them, above such trifling matters as the obligations of daily life, and can entertain their audience by showing that they have at their fingers' end the intellectual universe. We regarded Episcopalians, at the time I speak of, and that time with many is not by any means past, as far behind us in piety and scholarship, owing in some measure, as I suppose, to

the fact that individualism is happily lost in the Church, and that the Episcopal clergy are, for the most part, content with the fixed "yea, yea, and nay, nay" of the primitive creed, and are satisfied if they can imbue their preaching, like their prayers, with the simple learning and the simple piety of other days, gathering as they do from the short and melancholy history of Presbyterianism, that "what soever is more than these cometh of evil." Said an eminent divine, who was asked why he had exchanged the declamatory manner of his earlier ministry, for a style more dispassionate and mild, "When I was young, I thought it was the *thunder* that killed, but when I grew wiser, I discovered that it was the lightning; so I determined that in future I would thunder less and lighten more."

With these views, which might have been rectified by better acquaintance with the Episcopal Church, and particularly with her clergy, who for the most part deny themselves the luxury of exhibiting their learning or their piety, as incompatible in general with the intentions of their office, and their own proper fitness for its duties, I entered the Presbyterian ministry. I had been personally acquainted, in my whole life, with but two or three of the Episcopal clergy; and of these, the only one that I ever intimately knew, I had seen, in the day of "revivals" spying out, and to all appearance coveting the liberty of his dissenting brethren, and mingling, to great disadvantage, with all sorts of sects, who amused themselves much at his awkward balancings among them, and assigning as his best reason for not admitting these brethren into his pulpit, that "one of the canons of his church forbade it." By the way, it was an apology that elicited from an illiterate old lady, that had been for many years the housekeeper in my father's family, a remark having a range and force

of meaning, of which she in her dotage, and myself then fourteen years of age, but little dreamed, that "if that were the case, she thought *they had better fire that canon off.*" Right! Thought I to myself—and so I acknowledge that it strikes me still—that if Episcopacy be of the small importance that some attach to it, "they had better fire that canon off."

Leaving Princeton with such impressions, it is not surprising that, with no temptation to call them in question; with "Bishop and Presbyter for convertible terms in the New Testament;" with "the testimony of the famous Jerome," called by Prosper in his own age the *magister mundi*, and by Erasmus long afterward "the prince of divines," ringing forever in my ear; with a faint echo from Augustine, "the most brilliant and orthodox link of the *catena* between Paul and Calvin;" I found neither time nor inclination, amidst the convulsive throes of revivalism, and the monstrous brood of theological shiboleths, to which those throes gave birth, to review opinions which had in their favour, as I had been taught, and as I still believed, the entire evidence of scripture, and "the unanimous consent of the first three centuries of the Church."

CHAPTER V.

ABUSES AND DISUSE OF BAPTISM.

I am aware that it is quite easy to discover inconveniences and evils in the working of particular theories or systems, however wisely conceived, so long as those systems must depend for their preservation or efficiency upon the sagacity and purity of human counsels. But where the evils are found to be co-extensive with the system; and where the system is unshackled and free to work out its legitimate results, and yet makes no effort to throw these evils off; but they circulate invariably with its life, and pursue it as closely as the shadow does its substance, and eat as a canker to its very core; it is perfectly fair to suspect some radical defect, and to look into the system itself for an explanation of the fact.

One of the worst and earliest inconveniences, that I found adhering to the system from which I have been emancipated, was its unwarrantable restriction of the sacrament of baptism. I had received, so far as those around me could impart it, a power to baptize, and to "suffer little children to come"—and expressly, it had been, as I supposed, enjoined me by the master, to "forbid them not." But I presently discovered that my church forbade them. So well is this prohibition understood among Presbyterians that a minister is seldom, and many a minister among them never, called on to baptize a child, unless at least one of its parents be a communicant in the church. If it be said, that their written discipline does not necessarily impose this restriction, and that formerly a better custom,

obtained, I have only to reply, that this is then another of the instances, to be often adverted to hereafter, in which the written and fixed traditions of the system have been supplanted by the unwritten or the variable and the popular.

But before proceeding further, let us know what are the facts which we intend to employ as premises in this discussion. And let us first adduce those of a more general nature and from authentic documents, that, when we come to state those of our own private experience, they may not be suspected of exaggeration or distortion.

In the month of May, 1848, there were in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, 192,022 communicants; and the number of infants baptized within the ecclesiastical year, was 9,837; or, one infant to between nineteen and twenty communicants. It would therefore require nineteen and a half years to make the number of baptized children, if every one of them should live, equal to the present number of communicants.

Now take the Presbyteries of the great cities from Canada to Florida, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

Presbyteries.	Communicants.	Infants baptized.	Proportion of inf'ts baptized to no. of com.
Albany, ...	4,173	125	1 to 33
New York, ...	4,729	226	1 to 21
New Brunswick, ...	4,534	165	1 to 27
Baltimore, ...	2,395	109	1 to 22
Cincinnati, ...	1,672	62	1 to 27
St. Louis, ...	1,159	57	1 to 20
Charleston, ...	843	35	1 to 24
	19,505	779	1 to 25

Now, in contrast with this, as far as I have access to annual Reports and Journals, the proportion of infants bap-

tized to the number of communicants, in the Episcopal church, is a little more than one to five.* During a ministry of six years in the Church, I have with my own hand baptized as many children as the whole Presbytery of New York with its thirty-five ministers, according to the above table, would do in three.

But, to go still more into detail. The mother of Presbyterian churches in New York numbers 373 communicants; the Rev. Dr. Phillips reports *fifteen infants* baptized the past year. The Brick church has 668 communicants; Dr. Spring reports *twenty-six infants* baptized. The Rev. Dr. Potts, who has written against Episcopacy as "illiberal and anti-republican," has 232 communicants, and reports *twelve infants* baptized. The Rev. Dr. Smith, of Charleston, who was my classmate at Princeton, and has written a book in defence of Presbytery, has 408 communicants, and reports *six infants* baptized. The Rev. Dr. Boardman, of Philadelphia, also my cotemporary at Princeton, reports 482 communicants, and *one infant* baptized. He too, I believe, has written a book against the Episcopal church.— Thus, while the books multiply, the flocks diminish.

Early in my ministry, a circumstance occurred, that forced this subject very affectingly upon my notice. I had in those days, a sister, in whose heart had long dwelt a measure of the grace of God, that is, if some of the most pleasing fruits of piety may make it lawful so to pronounce; although the spark often trembled for existence, un replenished as it was from the fires of the altar. She was one of those many persons, who, under the influences of insufficient teaching, look unfortunately on the sacra-

* In some few Calvinistic congregations, the proportion sinks to one half this estimate. Thus, in St. George's, New York, according to the last Report, the number of communicants was 463, and of infants baptized, 45; or one to ten. But the same year, the number of communicants in the Diocese was 13,486, and of infants baptized 2,658, or one to five.

ment of the altar, not with too *much* awe—that were impossible—but with that *kind* of dread, which man's chief enemy employs to keep back the hungering and fainting heart from the strengthening nourishment of "the children's bread." And my sister's soul was of that sensitive and gentle texture, that it stood amazed, and at times half wild, at the exactions of a stern and frigid Calvinism; and the bruised reed had been often well nigh broken, and the smoking flax well nigh quenched.

Having myself embraced with much satisfaction that view of the sacraments, which is yet to be found in the Confession of Faith, where it stands as a witness against an unbelieving age, I fell into conversation with my sister respecting the education of the lovely children which the Lord had given her, and pressed her with the fact, that the only "good beginning" she could make with them, must date from the grace of baptism. She told me, that it had been the most painful desire of her heart, to have them baptized; but knowing as she was not a communicant herself, that the customs of her church did not allow it, she had never dared to ask it. She then inquired of me, if I would baptize them for her. "Can any man forbid water," said I to myself, "that these should not be baptized as well as we," we, who are far more filled than they, with all manner of unbelief and sin. What am I, that I should usurp the throne of judgment, and "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children?" What right have I, even were the parents visibly withering in the blight of a secret and eternal decree, to include in it those little ones, that, like the "six score thousand" in Nineveh, that turned God's judgment into mercy, "cannot discern their right hand from their left?" The practice of my church forbids them; but my heart, and One greater than my heart says, "Forbid them not." I could not hesitate. I felt it

proper however to advise her, first to make trial of her own pastor, who was weary himself, as I knew, of some of the asperities of his theology; and who accordingly gave the sweet infants, *privately*, for fear of establishing an injurious precedent, the sacrament, which his church in the like circumstances, universally withholds. It must be added however, that this excellent man thought it necessary afterward to apologize for this act of mercy, on the ground that, in the right and might of his own "private judgment," he had himself for a long time regarded their mother as a believing Christian. Only in two other instances, during a ministry of seven years, can I recollect having been requested to baptize the children of a non-communicant. It is a pleasing reminiscence now, that, in all these instances, the practice of a purer age invited me to rise above the tramels of a new-invented theory, and to refuse to do it homage where it did violence to every feeling of the heart. And sad and chill would be my visits now to the silent field, where the three flowers, snatched from a sister's bosom, lie each in its bed, waiting to rise and bloom side by side again, when the Sun of righteousness shall return and shine upon the sod, were I to recollect, that, before they were planted in that dust, I had raised a finger to prevent their being watered, by *any* human hand, with the dews of baptism. But little did I suspect that that mother would have so soon been called to bathe with her tears the brows that had been so lately bathed at the fountain of grace. Not many have drunk, at a single draught, so deeply of the Master's cup as she.

"The shaft flew thrice, and thrice her peace was slain,
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had filled her horn."

"For God, to draw her spirit heavenward,
Severed the golden chains that bound her here,
And placed her idols nearer to himself,
To lure her onward to the better land."

For, as they have been planted in the likeness of His death, they shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. And it is sweet to think,

"Babes, thither caught from womb and breast,
Have right to sing above the rest,
For they have gained the happy shore
They never saw nor sought before.

"We are the babes no more
That gave their feeble wailing to thine ear,
Free from the cumbering clay, we mount, we soar,
Onward and upward through a boundless sphere.

"We dwell no more with pain—
We shed no tears—we feel no panting breath—
Sweet mother, do not grieve for us again,
We are so blest, we bless the hand of death.

"Turn with unwavering trust
From the green earth-bed where the body lies,
Thou didst but lay our covering in the dust,
Thy children live, will live beyond the skies.

"There we shall meet again,
O yes! believe it, meet to part no more!
We'll welcome thee with heaven's angelic train,
And lead thee to the Saviour we adore."

But again to the cold regions of speculation, and to my chilling theme. To me the reasoning was direct and just; that the child that is unfit to be baptized, is unfit to die; the child that may not be admitted into the church below, for fear of tainting it, may not be admitted into the pure bosom of the church above. There is no evading the startling inference, and humanity shudders and falls back from the terrible conclusion! Tell me not, when my child is dead, that it has gone safe; why then did you withhold the token of its safety, that *antitupon* of St. Peter, of which he declares that the ark upon the water, and the water bearing up the ark, and both conspiring to save the eight members of the church of God, were together the type? "The like figure whereunto," he declares, "even Baptism, doth also now save us." Tell us not, when our children are dead, that although the Bible is not a revelation to in-

infants, yet the intimations that it drops give us reason to believe that they have gone safe! for these insinuations pierce the heart with a sting more acute than death, and your withholding Baptism leaves with us the awful feeling—mistify and disguise it as you may—that you are not quite certain that our dear departed ones were born again.

The Presbyterian church, not content with making so prominent the disheartening view of election, which it has chosen to incorporate into her faith, has undertaken to intimate, at least in a general way, which of our babes are not of "that happy number," by allowing Baptism—the "sign and seal," as they believe of that election—to one infant and by refusing it to another. Yet the laity, for the most part, submit tamely to the usurpation—a usurpation unmatched, so far as I know, both in its essence and its extent, by any tyranny of priest-ridden Rome. Yet I have known instances, in which the parent, urged on by the cry of nature, and the voice of God within him, has taken his child "by night" to the minister of a Church, that claims to be "the Lamb's wife" and the "mother of us all"—a Church that, since the beginning of the creation, has never withheld her Baptism from the lost children of Adam. Yes, we proclaim it with unmingled satisfaction, that this same Church so denounced as exclusive, bigoted, intolerant—pours from her open hand the waters of pardon and of promise on the universal family. How is it that Presbyterianism—with a confession that speaks of "elect men" and of "elect angels" and of "ELECT INFANTS" (see Conf. chapters iii and x.)—and notoriously and every hour withholding baptism from new-born babes, for no other reason than the lurking apprehension that these babes may not be "of the happy number"—has claimed so long to be considered "liberal" and democratic; while the

church that clasps your infant to her heart as soon as it is born, and beckons the whole family of man within her pale, has been branded as illiberal, intolerant, and bigoted?

The day for this *ad captandum* declaration is passing away, and the eyes of the people are opening to the facts. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," say the Lamb and the Lamb's bride:—"Suffer the children of communicants whom we have privately examined, and pronounced to have in our judgment the marks of distinguishing grace to come," says the Presbyterian religion. "He died for all," "a ransom for all," "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man," declares the Holy Ghost, and redeclares it by the church that he inspires:—"Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, but the elect only," contends the Presbyterian confession, (chap. iii. sec. 7.) "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men," proclaim the Bible and the echoing Church:—"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and spirit," reasserts the Presbyterian confession. "Who will have all men to be saved," is the teaching of the Gospel and the Church:—"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death," and, "These men and angels, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished," is the sad wail of the Presbyterian confession, (chap. iii, sec. 3-4.)

We appeal to the understandings of men. Which of the two is illiberal and bigoted? Let the Presbyterian, whose

child, for which Christ died, and which Christ pronounced more fit for the kingdom of God than we, and to be the object of an angel's watch and guard, has yet been excluded from the church on earth and from the only Sacrament which an infant can receive, answer this question. A day will come, when the Presbyterian ministry will be compelled to a better practice, or their people into a better Church. That day may be delayed by prudently keeping the subject in the back ground, and the people in ignorance of the efficacy and the grace of Baptism. Their ministers dare not bring it forward, and hold it up, as it is exhibited in their own Confession of Faith. Listen to its solemn and delightful testimony! Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, *not only*, for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the *visible church*, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of *grace*, of his *ingrafting into Christ*, of REGENERATION, of *remission of sins*" — "The *efficacy* of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is *not only* offered, but *really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost*, to such, whether of age or INFANTS, as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time." (Conf. chap. xxviii, secs. 1 and 6.) "Let but the commons hear this testament!" With the recovery of the lost doctrine of "*efficacy*," and "*grace*" and "*regeneration*," and "*ingrafting into Christ*" and "*remission of sins*" "*not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost*," in Baptism, their ministers would be compelled to make its living waters again free for all, or parents, driven by the instincts of their natures, would fly, with their children in their arms, like doves into the church windows. Ministers of the Presbyterian church!

I call upon you by the deep solemnity of an awful sacrament—and many a pained heart among your people joins me in the call—to justify this language that you hold respecting “elect infants,” or to abandon the practice that results from it in drawing a dividing line among infants, and excluding the majority from the grace of Baptism.—‘The rains of heaven fall alike on all. The sun in heaven shines equally on all. The wind from heaven is wafted alike to all. The rivers and the fountains spring and flow for all. Free for all, is the plain handwriting upon every work of God. What then is this distinction you have drawn between my neighbour’s children and my own? Speak? Tell us plainly, are some of them elect, and others not? or are some of them born but once and others born again? I venture to term it an oppression that the Church in no age and in no instance ever dared to impose—nay, a cruelty that Rome, in the days of her worst tyranny, would have shuddered to inflict; this punishing the parent in the child, repelling a redeemed infant, because its parents have sinned, from the only Sacrament of which it is capable, the heaven-ordained point at which grace is sent forth to meet it. It “asks bread,” and, because its parents have not eaten the bread that you break, with a heart as cold and hard as your gift, you “give it a stone:” “it asks an egg,” and, to sting the erring parent, you put into its little hand a “scorpion:” it “asks a fish,” and you “give it a serpent,” and leave it to become the serpent’s prey.

It is a discipline that is fast driving off reflecting Presbyterians among the Baptists, or back by God’s blessing to the Episcopal Church. So few already are the infants baptized in the Presbyterian denomination in this country, that it differs but little from a Baptist community, and may in strict propriety of phrase be called a semi-Baptist church.

The difference between them is, that the one excludes all infants indiscriminately from Baptism; the other, venturing to discriminate, excludes more than three-fourths. As might have been expected, the Baptists in their position are altogether the stronger of the two. Every Presbyterian minister well knows that even his communicants often acquiesce in infant Baptism on vague and insufficient grounds, or are constantly harassed by most painful and perplexing doubts. Let me be rather the consistent Baptist, in a good conscience denying Baptism to all infants alike, than the semi-Baptist, daring to tread where Gabriel would quake to follow, and to draw among the infants of a span long the tremendous separation between sheep and goats. As a layman I might have tamely submitted to the iron rule, and without resistance have heard the clinking key opening the kingdom to one infant and locking it against another; but, as a theologian, I could not endure the thought, or long believe, that this was the representative or the lawful almoner of God's love upon earth. I became early and clearly satisfied, that, on this most interesting point at least, Episcopacy was in the right, gathering, as the rightful mother, the universe of infants to her arms; and that Presbytery was in the wrong, to a degree that the world can hardly ever forgive or any longer endure.

That sectarianism has ever borne a singular resemblance to Romanism, has been remarked ever since its birth, and is not surprising, if we reflect that they are of a common parentage, born at the same time, one at Westminster, and one at Trent, and that the twins alike decline to have their legitimacy tested, by bringing into court the ancient mother—the Catholic or universal faith. My musings on the abuse and disuse of Baptism brought the coincidence of

the two systems strikingly to mind. If the Romanist has erred and played the tyrant, in substracting from "the people" the more significant part of the Christian sacrifice; the part of which the Lord emphatically, as if to forestal the usurpation, said, "Drink ye *all* of it;" the Presbyterian has erred and played the tyrant, in substracting the whole of another most precious sacrament from millions of little ones, all pure in heart, of which the Saviour of the world, with the like emphasis, as if to anticipate this usurpation also, said, and said in a moment when he "was much displeased," "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." If then I am bid to fly from Romanism, for withholding the more significant portion of one sacrament, from those who are entitled to receive it; with all the holy instincts of parental love, let me fly from Presbyterianism, for withholding another sacrament—the only one of which my child is capable—from infants, who, by a Redeemer's legacy, are entitled to its benefits, and who, after the Testator's resurrection, were still upon his heart, when he said to a shepherd of his flock, "Feed my lambs," *If ye love me, "feed my lambs."*

I know the Pelagianism that thrives wherever Presbytery has prepared the soil, and the secret thought with many, and the practical feeling with more, that infants do not need the grace of Baptism, nor indeed any grace whatever. I was once invited, in this land of ours, into a pious family in New York, for the purpose of baptizing a dying infant, whose Baptism had been already very carelessly delayed. Even at that time I had so far a glimmering perception of the truth, as to understand that Baptism was at least a joyful expression of the parents' faith in the new salvation; that it was the visible bond of the Christian brotherhood on

earth; that it conveyed the grace which to one "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity" is indispensable; and that infant Baptism, to take the lowest view of it, was a compliance with the will of Christ, and was the dictate of natural humanity and of parental instinct. Such were my musings as I went on my unaccustomed errand to baptize a dying child. Aware that Pelagianism had deeply tainted the minds of both the parents, I rather wondered that this should have been the only instance of the kind in which I had ever been invited to officiate. But on my arrival at the house, where the healing waters were already sparkling in the bowl, and the sweet infant about to return to the arms that encircled infants when He was on earth, the mother of the child, seeming to understand that the Baptism of an infant must after all mean *something*, interposed a murmur, that "it needed no Baptism — and was as safe without it—why should it be disturbed?" Her infant died—died unbaptized—went into eternity without faith's mark upon its brow—and was saved, as the child of the infidel or Hottentot is saved, with nought to impart to it a difference of glory in the resurrection, nought by which angels might know that it had come from a christian land, in fact without the only sacrament by which the gospel can be preached, or its distinctive grace conveyed to an infant mind. I have not to this hour received the shock that this occurrence gave me; nor could I now tell whether the stronger emotion was disgust or grief. Even then I sympathized not only with Baxter, and Owen, and Edwards, and Miller in their view of the privileges to which Baptism exalted the recipient, not only with Presidents Finley and Smith, who, in the belief that original sin is washed away in this sacrament and the recipient placed on a new footing and under happier auspices, were in the habit of baptizing

as many infants as they could reach ; but my sympathies were entirely with the Confession of Faith, which, in common with all others of the period of the Reformation, exalts this sacrament to be the vehicle of quickening and regenerating grace. Such views, although I have never seen a Presbyterian layman that either embraced or understood them, have not, it is fair to say, entirely disappeared among the Presbyterian clergy. The present Professor of Theology at Princeton — perhaps as profound a divine as Calvinism in either hemisphere can boast of, and whose qualities of heart are not inferior to those of his mind, on the subject of Baptism, for a moment partially eluded the trammels of his system, as that system has been recently developed, and, consistently enough with the written confession of his church, has dropped the following language : “ And when about to dedicate their children to God, in Holy Baptism, how earnestly should they [the parents] pray, that they might be baptized with the Holy Ghost — that while their bodies are washed in the emblematical laver of regeneration, their souls may experience the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. If the sentiments, expressed above be correct, then may there be such a thing as *baptismal regeneration* ” [the italics are his own ;] “ . . . and, what time in infancy is *more likely* to be the period of spiritual quickening, than *the moment* when that sacred rite is performed, which is strikingly emblematical of this change. . . . If by *means*, be understood something which is accompanied by the divine efficiency, changing the moral nature of the infant, then in this sense, baptism may be called *the means of regeneration*.” *

* Thoughts on Religious Experience by the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., Professor, &c.; published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, 400 pages, see page 26 of the Third Edition.

But the view of this Sacrament, that stares them in the face, on the pages of their written standards, Presbyterians have for the most part lost; and we fear that there is no conservative or counteracting principle in the system, to which we can look with any hope for its recovery. We rather fear, that, having gotten so far away from their standards, the gravitation toward them is continually lessening, and the whole body is fated to go farther still into still chillier regions. Some few perhaps may fall in love with the opinions put forth in a volume some years ago by a living and eminent divine of New York, that infants have a law written on their hearts, against which they are capable of wilful sin, and may be the proper subjects of everlasting perdition before they have even seen the light of day;—from which the inference will be direct, that they must not therefore be baptized, until they have given actual signs of repentance. Others will adopt the more popular Pelagianism, that infants, being not yet sinners, do not yet stand in need of Baptism;—from which, though an opposite quarter to the former, the same result must follow, that infants by and by will receive no Baptism. A more consistent and ingenuous portion will adhere to the old Calvinistic ground of their Confession, that there are “elect infants,” as well as “elect angels and men,”—which, from the difficulty of ascertaining them, will greatly abridge, as it has fearfully abridged already, the extent of infant Baptism, and must cause it ultimately to fall into disuse. With others, again, the Quaker or mystic notion of a spiritual church, into which Presbyterians are fast degenerating, will continue rapidly to gain ground, and will greatly discourage, and eventually wipe out the last vestiges of infant Baptism. It is demonstrable from facts and figures, that if infant Baptism grow as rapidly

into disuse among Presbyterians for the time to come as it has done for fifty years past, one hundred hence, the Presbyterian church as a pædobaptist society will exist no more. It is already as we have called it, a semi-Baptist denomination. In the Presbytery of St. Louis, the number of adults baptized the last year wanted but eight, to be equal to that of baptized infants: that of Cincinnati wanted but twenty-two; that of New Brunswick, including Princeton, wanted but twelve; the adults being one hundred and fifty three, the infants one hundred and sixty five.

The Baptists see distinctly that infant Baptism cannot be maintained, and is not worth maintaining, on the popular grounds adduced by Presbyterians in its defence. In fact they see that separated from regeneration, it ceased to be a Sacrament; and not knowing "a more excellent way," and laying themselves the stress which Holy Scripture lays upon the ordinance, they will stand firm, and must necessarily increase by continual accessions from the Presbyterians, who will find it more and more out of their power to resist the encroachment. Meanwhile *the Church*, planting one foot on the ground of the Baptists, as to the value and efficacy of the Sacrament, and the other on the ground of the Bible and of humanity, and of historical Christianity, as to its extent, will continue to flourish, with a stability and growth that shall provoke the losers in this game to jealousy. Already, among the Presbyterians, infant Baptism has fallen into the disuse that Anabaptists could desire. Already thousands of parents, who still, from a vague compliance with old customs or with the wishes of a jealous pastor, "*suffer*" their little ones to come to the sacrament, are free to admit, that they scarcely see a necessity for what they do. Already, the pious Presbyterian is not made a whit more unhappy for having

failed to imprint the token of its safety on the pale forehead of a deceased or dying child, than the pious Pelagian !

Indeed, Presbyterians are now but little behind the Quakers in reform. The "spiritual"—the "spiritual"—the "spiritual"—this is the sense in which every thing is to be understood ; and if you speak to them of order and ordination, the daily prayer, the weekly oblation, outward reverence and external rites, bodily fasting and alms-deeds and worship, external Sacraments, and a visible Church bridging the past to the present, and the present to the future, you seem but a Papist to many, and the lament of "a mixed multitude" rings sorrowfully in your ear, "Take these things hence ! Are ye so carnal ? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ?" In the determination to be "spiritual," they are hardly a whit behind Swedenborg himself in his flight from the regions of flesh and sense. To them as to him, it would seem that the Jewish Church was but the creeping worm out of whose shell the Church Christian was to take wing, and the Church Christian, as it has heretofore existed, but the shell in its turn, which the "spiritual" brotherhood are to despise and leave behind. This crying down external order and sacramental privilege, and this assuming superior "spiritual" discernment, as if they were "out of the body," or as if Christ had never come in the flesh, may lull for a while the sense of injury on the subject which we are here discussing. But let Baptism get to be restored among them to the place assigned to it by the Westminster divines in the Confession which their ministers still vow at their ordination to defend, and not more certainly will the ice relax under the returning sun of summer, than the people will demand, according to the charter of their rights and of unlimited redemption, that the sign of that redemption be set

on the foreheads of their children ; and that, when infants die, no cold *perhaps* shall follow them to the bosom of God ; no chilly *reasoning* shall come to bind up the parent's heart ; no such *language* as " elect infants " shall be tolerated another hour ; but that every heartless distinction and doubt shall be wiped out, and the brotherhood of the human family be restored, as the second Adam intended it to be, in the " One Baptism." If still they should be denied the heavenly boon—if still they should be driven from the healing waters, then their alternative will be, as with many it has already been, to fly from the chill atmosphere of an exclusive and repulsive system—a system so stern that it can frown upon an infant in its cradle—to the more genial bosom of the church.

Do not tell us that Presbyterians, in some other countries, still baptize children indiscriminately.

We have something to say hereafter of the system as it exists in other countries. In other countries, it is hampered by the State, and " cannot do the things that it would." We are dealing now with Presbyterianism " under its own vine and fig-tree," where it is free, and freely working out its legitimate results. We raise our voice for the rights of parents among a preacher-ridden people—rights which a strange oppression springing up in this republic is trampling under foot. We lift our voice for the rights of infants to the blessings of " the kingdom of heaven "—infants, that like the " six score thousand " speechless but successful pleaders for the " salvation of Nineveh," have not known " their right hand from their left." We demand, in presence of a people who, like the Jews, suppose that they have never been in " bondage to any man," that there shall in the eye of the gospel be, at least among infants, no privileged or elect class. We demand the broad

confession, that all our children have been redeemed by the blood gushing warm from a Saviour's heart, and that the water flowing with it from his side was intended to bathe their brow. In the ears of earth and heaven, we invoke the ancient charter of the Church against this encroachment on the inalienable rights and liberties of man.

If I could give no other reason for my return to the Church, than has been here presented, I might, with a heart full of peace, here rest my appeal with God and men—that God, who with a Parent's heart has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not"—and that humanity, which He has endowed with the same sympathies and the same parental instinct.

But my dissatisfaction did not stop here, for the reason that the frightful evil does not stop here. Presbytery, like Popery, has in its way, multiplied the sacraments, by, inevitably, suggesting the idea of two Baptisms. Or, as the Romanist has divided a commandment, to make up the ten; so the Presbyterian has divided the sacrament of Baptism, to answer private views. I can recollect a time, when I imagined that the chief practical virtue of Baptism consisted in imposing vows and obligations on the parent, and that its efficacy depended entirely on the faith of the parent in making the dedication of his child. Poor child! regenerate or not, according to the parent's mind! Wherein does this differ from Popery, which quickens the water or the wafer to its purpose, according to the intention of the priest?

Yet this is perhaps the prevailing explanation of this delightful sacrament among my former brethren. But if this be so, why—as I learned afterward to reason—why are not the words of the ceremony addressed to the parents? And why is Baptism considered complete, even if the pa-

rent be not present ? And why, though the parent should immediately die, is the impressive ceremony never to be repeated, so that there should be never but the one Baptism ? And why are the words of Baptism addressed to the infant ? For instead of something impressive to the parent, the minister speaks in an unknown tongue—for it might as well be in Greek as in English—to a passive infant, saying, “ N., I baptize *thee* in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ! ” Very extraordinary all this, thought I—that infants may not only be baptized in the same water with adults, but may be addressed in the same mysterious words, “ I baptize *thee* ”—if Baptism mean one thing—*regeneration*—in the adult—and something else *no mortal can tell what*—in the infant !

Let Presbyterians answer the charge which we here make, that they hold two Baptisms ; a Baptism declaring to men and angels, as a fact, the regeneration of the adult ; and a Baptism declaring something else, certainly not regeneration, in an infant. If, when administered to an adult, it signifies that he is born again and restored to the favour of God, and, when ministered to an infant, it signifies that he is *not* born again ; we certainly perceive two Baptisms. Nor is there a possible escape from this dilemma, except on ancient and Bible premises, that neither adult nor infant is “ born again,” but as it is accomplished by the joint agency of “ the Spirit and the Bride,” or, as our Lord expresses it, “ except ye be born of water and of the Spirit.” Tell us not, that Baptism administered by you to infants, signifies prospective regeneration. This is Pelagianism. Tell us not, that it signifies their need of that regeneration ; for why then do you not baptise them all, or even, like the Jesuit, catch the wild Indian, and *bon gre ma! gre* baptise him, as the most solemn method of declaring that he

"must be born again?" But you tell us, Baptism represents regeneration as accomplished, *un fait accompli*, in the adult; then tell us, we ask again, what it does signify in the infant? We repeat that we think you cannot tell. You know that your views are vague.

No, sirs; you must give up the ground you occupy to the Baptists, or you must go back to your Confession of Faith—the offspring of a more vigorous and healthy Reformation. You must go back to the principles with which you set out three centuries ago, "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;" for "by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body." What Baptism means in one it means in all. What it signifies in the sinner of a hundred years, it signifies in the infant of a span long. "I baptise THEE in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." You tell us what this is in an adult; pray tell us, if you have the courage or the power, what it is in an infant. Only beware, that, in attempting it, you do not fall into a grand error of the Papists, and multiply sacraments, as they have done, or divide them, as they have divided a commandment, and as they have divided the communion, and that you do not give a *whole* sacrament to adults, and a *half* sacrament to infants. For, besides dividing the communion, and withholding the cup from the laity, we hear that Romanists, in certain cases of discipline and penance, to prevent scandal and to save appearances, will allow a prince, or any other individual where the motive is sufficient, to approach the altar, and receive a wafer, but a wafer not consecrated, and therefore without virtue; which has been called a blank or *white communion*. Precisely so, the Presbyterian ministry, it would now appear, give the same water and words, and, as the world looking on would think the same thing, to

the infant as to the adult; but to the cheated infant, it is not the baptism that an adult receives—it is a blank, *white baptism*. And while the Papist and the Presbyterian must look about them for a vindication of these strange abuses, I may in the meantime be allowed to think that I have something to be gratified for, in being extricated from the toils of an oppressive system, and led out of the *sic volo, sic jubeo*, of Popery and Presbytery, into “the glorious liberty” of a Church—Catholic—Reformed—and Free.

CHAPTER VI.

SACRAMENTS.

I have never remarked whether Presbyterian church edifices have eastern ends. Popish as it is, I suppose they sometimes have. But I have heard that in an old Presbyterian burying ground on Long Island, the feet of the dead of a certain epoch lie all toward the West, and that many years ago, an Episcopal clergyman, who desired to repose within its precincts, required by his will, that he should be interred, according to the ancient custom of all Christian folk, with his feet and face toward the East; and that so it was allowed, and that the burial-place is still shown, whereby, "he being dead, yet speaketh." But, in a Presbyterian church, that stood a few years since in Wall-street, there was a *Nothern* window—I believe, behind the *pulpit*—of some ecclesiological merit—perhaps of stained glass. An Episcopal clergyman, wishing at that time to see the specimen, applied to a gentleman of that congregation, who very obligingly offered to accompany him into the church. As they stood together in the aisle, this gentleman, feeling doubtless safe in his own castle, took the opportunity to say to the clergyman, "Those Oxford men are doing an immensity of mischief; only to think, sir, of their altering the Bible?" "What!" said my friend, with some astonishment, "I was not aware that they had gone so far as *that*." "Yes, sir; if you will step with me into the pulpit I will show you. Here, sir, is an Oxford edition of the Bible, that we have lately got out from England; and a young minister, officiating for our Pastor on Sabbath last,

was reading the Revelation of John, and read it over and over—"the four living creatures—the four living creatures," instead of "the four beasts;"—I believe those Oxford men rather disrelish John's Revelation, particularly what he says about *beasts*;—yes, sir, they are altering the Bible?" "I hardly think that can be so," said the Episcopalian; "let us look!" The layman, as much as to say, "Now I have you," dashed into the Apocalypse, looking through grave glasses that had never deceived him before, for his "living creatures;" when, lo, and behold, "the four beasts"—"the four beasts"—there they were, "the four *beasts*, lion, calf, man, and eagle," staring him in the face, "with eyes before and behind." "There's something wrong," said the layman, after a pause, "he certainly did read it so." "Very likely he did," replied the clergyman of the weather-beaten Church; "There was nothing Roman however about it; it was your young man wanting to show off his *Greek*; I think I have heard that your Presbyterian ministers of late, in reading the Bible, often stop to correct the translation, and thus weaken the confidence of the people in its truthfulness; *but ours never do*; I do not think, Mr. N., you need be uneasy about the Oxford divines; at least about their altering the Bible."

I have related this anecdote, because it is one of a class, and in my own mind is connected with another, which lies more directly in the plane of our narrative. A friend of mine—once, like myself, a Presbyterian minister, and now a clergyman of the Church—who had got a little weary of the pious lamentations of a Presbyterian neighbor, in the city of New York, over the fearful stridings of the Episcopal Church towards Rome, was at the house of his friend on a certain occasion, when, not much to his surprise, the old subject was brought forward. "Poh!"

said the grave Elder of an up-town congregation, "your Church is going over to Popery as fast as it can!" "A very grave charge," said his reverend guest, "I confess that I do not see how you would support it; but, if you have any good reason for thinking so, no man would thank you more than myself, and no Church would be more thankful than the old acknowledged 'bulwark of the Reformation,' if you would let us know it." "Why," said the Elder, with a look over his spectacles more searching than his ratiocination, "you are teaching regeneration in Baptism, and something wondrous-like transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper;—just see that 'Churchman' published in this city! Is not that Popery?" "Let me understand you, my dear sir," said my friend, "for now-a-days we scarcely know what Popery is;—would you call *this* Popery?" (*Reads from the last number of the Churchman*)—"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, *not only* for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the *visible Church*, but also to be unto him a sign and a seal of the covenant of *grace* of his *ingrafting into Christ*, of REGENERATION, of *remission of sins*." . . . "Yes, that's it! that's it! Don't you call that Popery?" interrupted the Elder. "Just wait a moment," said the clergyman, "let us hear it out:—'The *efficacy* of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the *grace* promised is *not only offered*, but really exhibited and *conferred by the Holy Ghost*.'" . . . "There, I told you so," again interrupted the impatient Elder; "ah! you are all going over to Popery; just what I told you!" "Well, you object to *that*—what have you to say to *this*?" (*Reads*) "There is in every Sacrament a Sacramental union between the sign and the thing signi-

fied. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do then also, inwardly, by faith, really and indeed receive and feed upon Christ crucified; the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally and carnally, yet *as really and truly*, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, *as the elements themselves are* to their outward senses. And they that worthily communicate, feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace." "Yes! there! I told you so! I told you so! All Popery! Popery! That's what your Oxford men are about! Well, John foretold it all;" (my friend had been a Presbyterian, long enough to know that *John* was neither the coachman of that name, nor the waiter that had answered the bell); "what is to be, will be; and *John* says, that 'the deadly wound,' that the Beast got at the Reformation, is to be 'healed,' and all the world is again to go after the—I beg you pardon—*beast!*" "Now, Mr. D.," replied the clergyman, "I have only waited to hear your opinions of the passages that I have read; I brought this paper with me this morning, on purpose that you might see what *your own church* teaches, or *did* teach, when she came from the hands of Knox and Calvin and the Westminster Divines. Just look and see for yourself; all that I have been reading has been taken from *your own Confession of Faith.*" (*The old gentleman takes the hebdomadal and reads—fidgets in his chair—looks into the fire—then looks up at his antagonist.*) "I don't believe that the Confession of Faith teaches any such thing; I shall not believe it, until I see it."—(*My friend draws from his pocket a volume, with a leaf turned down at a certain page, and hands it to the Elder—who reads a moment—fidgets—looks at the outside of the book*

—fidgets still more—examines the title page—reads the marked passage—fidgets tremendously—gives back the book.)
“Well, I can’t say,” said the Elder, “I never saw that in the Confession of Faith before; *if it is there*, I shall go and ask my minister to explain it.” “The truth is,” said the morning visitor, “you Presbyterians formerly held upon these points about the same doctrines that we do; witness the strong language of your own Calvin and Luther—but you have departed from your standards, and now imagine, because we adhere to ours, that we are going back to Popery. As you glide from the wharf, or recede from the shore, you imagine that the land is moving from you; but it is not the land that moves; it is your ship; the land stands still. In like manner, the Church, the building on the Rock stands still. *The Church is where it was.* It is you and your ship that are moving away, and throwing back the puny ripple against the everlasting Rock.” Suffice it to add, that my friend still keeps up his acquaintance at the Elder’s house, but that the old gentleman is by no means so lachrymose on the subject of Popery as formerly. It is said that he is waiting with some impatience for that explanation by his pastor.

Certain it is, that the Presbyterian Confession of Faith (much more the Dutch Reformed and the Lutheran) is as clear as the teaching of the Church Catholic, concerning the value and efficacy, both of Baptism and of the Lord’s Supper. But Presbyterians, almost to a man, have departed more widely from their standards, on the design and uses of the latter, than we have shown them to have done on the benefits and efficacy of the former.

We have seen, that out of the doctrine of election, and of regenerating grace and of effectual calling reaching only to the elect, has sprung up as a natural growth, the refusal

of the grace of Baptism to half the purest subjects of the kingdom of heaven. But, as if this were not enough for this "king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sayings," and opening the forbidden leaves of fate, the work of decimation must go further still. The Presbyterian standards enjoin, that "children, born within the pale of the visible Church, and dedicated to God in Baptism, when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege, to come to the Lord's supper." And, for more than a hundred years, this order was universally obeyed. But now their baptized children are denied "the children's bread," as much as if they had been crowned in their infancy with the turban or a crescent, or had been devoted in the Ganges to the pollutions of Bramha. Only their communicants are complacently addressed as "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith;" but all others, without regard to Baptism, are treated as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Such is this mother's love, and method of appealing to her children.

How often are my ears delighted, and my eyes gladdened now, to see the kind pastor going back with the youth of his flock to the bright fountains, where he had bathed them in the morning of life's sultry day, and to hear him speaking, in soft and winning tones, of sins forgiven, and of promised grace, and of the Angel that troubled the waters, and of the Holy Ghost that descended like a dove, and of the ministering Spirit that hovered near to receive its new charge, when the Lord "swore and entered into covenant with them, as he said: In the day that thou wast born,

and wast cast out on the open field, lo, I passed by and pitied thee and threw my skirt over thee ; then washed I thee with water, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk, in the day that thou wast born ; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain of pure gold on thy neck, and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head."

How often do I now see even "the strong man that keepeth his house," successfully resisting every approach, until, behold a stronger than he cometh, and by the chain that bound him when an infant, leading him back to the still waters, where, as in a glass, he too may see himself reflected, and how changed the crown fallen from his head and the fine gold become dim, and the white robe, intended for his resurrection-dress, all soiled and rent, and now a deep shade upon his brow once bright with the sign of the cross, and his bosom, once peaceful, now swelling high with the fears of eternity ! Oh, I have seen "the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves," at the recollections of Baptism.

But long as I was a Presbyterian, I never knew a baptized child to be admonished from the pulpit, of any privileges, or of any obligations, arising from the fact of Baptism. A baptized child is taught and trained, precisely as a Baptist would train one unbaptized ; and a Presbyterian congregation is addressed, as if the preacher were declaiming from a Baptist pulpit. And why is this, said I, when one apostle has called Baptism the *Antitype* (αντιτυπον) of the ark : and another has called it, "the washing of regeneration ;" and he who poured water on an apostle's brow, said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins ;" and He, who sent the same Saul to Ananias, said,

"Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God!" Are there two Baptisms—one admitting regenerate adults to all the privileges of the church—and the other admitting unregenerate infants to *nothing*!—Whether they live or die poor children, they fare no better for their Baptism! The Bible says, "One Baptism," as distinctly as it says "One God." The Bible declares "Baptized into One Body" as plainly as it proclaims "One Lord, One Faith, One Hope." In the Bible, Baptism is the door of admission to all other promises and privileges of the church. "If you baptize your children, or any part of them, why do you not admit them to the Lord's Supper?" is therefore the standing and effective objection of the Baptists. The Confession of Faith long ago yielded to its force. Even Dr. Miller, in the nineteenth century, succumbs to it himself. After advising that every means should be employed to retain baptized children in the communion of the church, he recommends, that if, after due admonition, they should continue to slight their birth-right and neglect the communion; "they should be proceeded with, and cut off, as if they had been communicants, and had afterwards apostatized from their profession."—But this is all theory. *Animum pictura pascit inani*. The new wine would make those old bottles burst and perish. Revivalism and election would go down together. No, Bible-baptism can never exist again among Presbyterians; it can never again be the door of entrance upon all the promises and privileges of the faithful; they will do as they have done—shut out more than half their little ones from the ark—and refuse, except on certain hard conditions, the bread for the voyage to few that are admitted. A new departure, I discovered, from the principles of the Reformation; let me fly with my children to a Church, where these principles are yet respected.

But Presbyterians cannot see their church thus falling off as under this discipline it must always do, in numbers ; and therefore, repudiating the healthy increase by the Scriptural method of " discipling and baptizing," they fall into human expedients, fraught with amazing opportunities for abuses and corruptions, by which the baptized and the unbaptized alike are urged on to a crisis, at which they are encouraged to believe, that they are born again, in a sense that shall forever make temptation essentially powerless, and apostacy utterly impossible. Ingenuity is tortured ; new measures are invented ; methods still newer and still newer are resorted to, to urge the imagination on to the ideal point, at which the exhausted fancy, in its moment of collapse, " lets go " the world, " gives up " its sins and its associates, loses its relish for its former ways, yields every point it once disputed ; like the death-bed penitent, when nature is too weak and weary any longer to sustain the controversy ; and this collapse, with the hysterical relief, and, it may be, ecstasy, that follows it, is understood to be the essence of conversion. The soul is now supposed to have received the afflatus of an imperishable life, so that the person never can fall entirely from grace ; and an incorruptible seed of the word is implanted in his understanding, which shall make him personally, and beyond what the Pope has ever claimed to be, infallible and indefectible in the doctrines of grace ; in a word, because his consciousness has undergone a strange disturbance, he thinks that he has experienced the needful change—" the *ictus* from beyond the fixed stars," as Mr Bushnell, of Hartford, struggling in this net himself, has dared recently and manfully to call it. I know that many, who have felt as they think, this lighting down of the omnipotent arm, are pure and " meet for the inheritance with the saints in light." But

it was not this sudden "ictus from beyond the fixed stars," that made them so. They have been under other influences, both before and since, that have made them what they are. I have been subjected, when a boy, myself, to the startling and electrifying agency of this species of machinery, and know it, even in the most prudent hands to be full of delusion and danger. Instead of being the one new birth, it is a regeneration that may be repeated at every camp meeting. I have known the southern negro, and I have known the illiterate white man, to be twice, and thrice, and perhaps twenty times, regenerated in this way; although a mind more enlightened or better balanced is seldom caught in the snare but once. As a Presbyterian, I saw much of such regenerations, and the more I saw of them, like Mr. Bushnell, the more I doubted them. "What careful minister seeing how many are gathered around him in the church, who manifest no real love to God in the practical duties of life, and have never shown any Christian character, save that they once were subjects of a religious rhapsody, has not often staggered under the suspicion of some dismal error, in the current views of religious experience? For myself, I feel obliged, in faithfulness to God, to declare that I have more than a suspicion on this subject." If the victim ever awake to the delusion, his awakening will be like that of the death bed penitent, who in a stormy and troubled hour built his hopes upon the sand—too late. The revival convert recovers his composure,—the powers of nature are restored,—the passions in their vigor return,—the world hangs out its lure,—and lo, the apostacy a little while ago pronounced impossible, has taken place! Sad memory here crowds its facts upon me. I will not speak of individuals, where troops and scores are rushing on my thoughts. I have known a congregation in New-York, of

four hundred communicants, to disappear, "as the early cloud," not even outliving the revival that had given it birth. I was myself, in the city of New York, the pastor of a congregation, of, nominally, five hundred communicants—the fruits, as the phrase was, of "powerful revivals;" but, when, as a shepherd, I made it my first business to "know my sheep and to be known of mine," and I sought them dilligently in the ways and byways, and employed a corps of twenty deacons and elders to aid me in the task, and more than once read the names of those we could not find to the whole body of communicants, and also in a published church manual designated them as missing, and though these inquiries were extended through a period little less than a year, one hundred and forty communicants could never be found. But what roused still more my suspicions respecting this theory of regeneration, was the fact, which I personally encountered early in my Presbyterian ministry, that the "Campbellites" or "Christians," or, to speak properly Socinian Baptists, denying the Lord that bought them and the very existence of the Holy Ghost, found it no difficult task to equal, and often to exceed, the Presbyterian and the Methodist, in the power of these "revivals," with singular readiness startling whole communities with the same phenomena, filling men's solitude with impressions, visions, dreams, and voices, and now numbering, after a career of less than thirty years, between three and four hundred thousand converts and communicants! If any thing could more than this shake my confidence in such a theory of the new birth, it would be a personal knowledge of the fact which I only know to be alleged, that similar phenomena, and especially the transitions from agitation to peace, from wild terror to ecstatic rapture, from agony of conscience to complete serenity,

from actual prostration to actual shouting, are not at all unfamiliar to certain forms of heathenism and of demon-worship.

The reader will pardon this digression. My object has been, without entering on a new subject, merely to call attention to the fact, that human expedients have grown up, and have become necessary, for the continuance and enlargement of the denomination, in sheer consequence of having set aside the Scriptural view of the church as a "household of faith," with its "little ones," its "young men," and its "fathers," to be perpetuated and extended by the spontaneous increase of itself. The "anxious seat" or the "inquiry meeting" has been conceived to possess far more sacramental virtue to regenerate than any Baptism. And singular it is, that, amidst all the agitations and theories which have shaken the Presbyterian body, and among all the reformers, that have risen to purge and restore their temple, there hath not risen one to suggest the restoration of the Sacraments. My own awakening on this subject, I owe, by God's blessing, mainly to a careful revision of the Confession of Faith, which as a minister, I had with great tenderness of conscience subscribed. And in this state of mind, with many prayers for the Divine guidance, in a task so novel, and requiring a measure of wisdom greatly in advance of my years, I prepared for the press a treatise on the Sacraments; which, however, I withheld from publication, not only because it would have created one frightful element more of distraction, in a body already most sadly rent, but also, because I saw reason to fear, that the tendencies of Presbyterianism were, *et semper et ubique*, so uncontrollably downward, that it might as soon be expected to stop the stars in their courses. Still I wonder, that the men, who have undertaken to reclaim that body

from the rationalistic influences of the new school of theology, have not first cast out the beam out of their own eyes. Only by the preservation of the Sacraments, will they preserve a vigorous theology. The Sacraments are the epitome of Christianity. As to the *Sacrament of Baptism*, we can scarcely say of it, *stat nominis umbra*; it has got to be regarded, and to be called, an unessential "rite." All idea of its efficacy has passed away, with the exploded dogmas of a less enlightened age; and with it, the doctrines of birth-sin, and of the new heart, and of regenerating grace descending on the soul, sit loosely on the popular mind, and are in danger of ultimate extinction. The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ has been also degraded into a mere human commemoration; and, with it, the great Catholic doctrine of "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction," as the Communion service of the Prayer Book defines it, "for the sins of the whole world," is openly excepted to, and, throughout New England absolutely lost. I have heard sermons upon free will, natural ability, "you can and you can't," the *modus operandi* in regeneration, and other metaphysical subtleties, until my soul was sick. I have heard sermons about some desolating fire; the stranding of some ship; the burning of some steamboat; the havoc of some storm; until fire, air, earth, and water, were exhausted. I have heard from the pulpit lectures upon great social enterprises, fourth-of-July orations, discourses on impending elections, eulogiums upon associations of men, and harangues upon the revolutions of empires and the abdications of princes. I have heard Unitarianism, Popery, Infidelity, dragged in from a distance, to supply themes for exciting declamation, and food for morbid appetites. I have heard sermons and lectures rambling into the future, pretending to "understand all

prophecy," and helping, with startling events to come, to fill up that great moral and practical vacuum that Calvinism creates and leaves. But never in my whole life, have I heard, from Presbyterian lips, a sermon on the efficacy of the Sacraments: as, for example, on the graces, fruits, uses, promises, and helps, of Baptism. If baptism has been ever named, it has been, perhaps amidst the heat of a revival, when converts must decide to which sect they would belong, or at the request of some unhappy questioner, to resist the encroachments of the Baptists, by endeavouring to make good the isolated, naked, cold, historical fact, that infants were baptized in the primitive church, or the still less edifying and more difficult assumption, that pouring or sprinkling was the common mode of its administration. Thus Presbyterians have retained the form, but have long ago denied the power of the Sacraments. They perform them mechanically. They keep the letter; they have lost the spirit. "the words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*." *Qui manet in litera, hæret in cortice*. For myself, I went further in my own teaching, and well recollect, that one of my elders took me severely to task, in presence of his peers, for calling the Sacrament of infants, what Dr. Alexander has called it in the extract lately quoted, "holy Baptism." Still I preached the gospel of grace, and the grace of the gospel, in the Sacraments, and was able to do it in the language of their own confession, that "there is in every Sacrament a sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified." But like the Baptist in the desert, I was preaching to the rocks. When I asked them of the doctrine, "Is it from heaven, or of men?" they reasoned, I suppose, among themselves; "If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, why then do ye not bring *all* your little ones to Baptism? but if we shall say, of men

he will say why then do ye bring *any*?" So that although Presbyterians appear to have two Baptisms—one proclaiming that the adult is regenerate, and is now an heir of the promises of God—the other, implying only, that the infant either needs regeneration, or will need it at some future time, according as the *animus imponentis* is Pelagian or Calvinistic; and, although they seem to have a Sacrament in the Lord's Supper, yet, denying it the "efficacy" ascribed to it in their Confession, as a "*means of grace*," it is perfectly clear, that they have after all, and strictly speaking no Sacrament at all. Not once in a thousand times do they grant Baptism to the dying penitent; not once in a thousand more, do they allow the Lord's Supper to the dying believer. The one is sent unwashed into the presence of his God; the other unfed into the solitudes and wastes of death. Both are compelled to violate, in the dying hour, the commands of Christ; while the living look on, and with easy aptness learn, that Sacraments may be neglected both by the living and the dying, as entirely unnecessary to salvation.

CHAPTER VII.

CONFIRMATION—LORD'S SUPPER—EXCOMMUNICATION.

Let us now suppose the child, baptized or unbaptized—it makes no difference with the Presbyterian, to have reached the next stage in life. We suppose him to be one of the elect, and to have received, at the "appointed time," that irresistible ictus of regeneration, for the want of which all the good things of his whole life before have been counted as evil, and by virtue of which, all the sins of his life afterward shall be so far counted to him for good, that they can no more "quench the spirit," that they can no more separate him from the favor of God, than they can separate him from his own existence.

He is now to "make a profession of religion, by the reception of the Sacrament." We stay not to find fault with the phraseology. We stop only to ask men who profess to be guided by the Bible alone, where in that book it is, that they find the "taking the Sacrament"—unless that they mean by the sacrament of Baptism—the authorized mode of "making a profession of religion?"

We suppose our candidate to have passed one ordeal in those agitating experiences, which so often rend and tear, and as if the evil one went out of them, are the accompaniments and signs of this species of regeneration. He has now to pass a more dread ordeal than the former, in relating these experiences to the company of the elders, or, if his lot have fallen among the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the like, to the whole body of communicants.—These elders, as my predecessor in a Presbyterian Parish

is said to have remarked, have been sometimes "made when timber was scarce," and, like annuitants, of course they never die. Albeit, I knew an instance, in which one died, and with a dry smile and sigh the good man's pastor remarked to me, that it was one of those seeming afflictions by which the Lord works great deliverances for his people. Can we wonder, that men of education and fine feeling, shrink from a catechizing by a bench of elders? If they hesitate for months and years and even until the end of life—of which we have known many a striking instance—are we, therefore, to set it down as evidence of some irregularity in their conversion? Or, suppose these elders to be grave, dignified, well-read, capable of voting intelligently, when "deep answers to deep" in theological debate, and ministers may be on trial for abstruse opinions, that are supposed to involve and sap the foundations of religion—it is evident that in presence of such a company, the different and meritorious, the meek and humble babe in Christ will appear as a lamb before her sheareis; while the rash and the vain will but reap assurance, from passing with the more eclat, the inquisitive—I might not err in calling it, inquisitorial conclave.

Thousands there are, to whom this "going before the Session," as the phrase is, to relate their experience, has haunted their lying down and their rising up, more than auricular confession has ever disturbed the papist, and, on the eve of the communion, when, above all other seasons, the mind should be quiet and self-possessed, has had a most painful influence in distracting and tormenting it. And scarcely a pastor but bewails the fact that, having passed this ordeal, his converts live thenceforth as light-hearted as if the day of judgment were appointed only to unseal and publish the verdict of the elders. And the monthly

and quarterly repetitions of experience, and confessions in classes, under a complete system of espionage, adopted by the Methodists, is but a poor remedy for these pernicious results.

It has often been the case, that these elders in session have felt themselves moved to pry into private histories with unnecessary and annoying interrogatories. One of their own ministers has complained, that the conditions or tests of communion, have erected around the sacramental table in some of their churches, "a fence ten rails high." I have heard the modest maiden interrogated whether she belonged to a temperance society, and I have seen an indignant woman refuse to answer whether she drank intoxicating liquors. The purity of this page reminds me, that here I must arrest my pen. But I do so with the question, "*Quid domini facient, audent cum talia fures?*" If in a decent congregation, and against the minister's remonstrance, these impertinent questions have been asked, what may not be done, and what rights may not be trampled under foot, where the reins are thrown loose upon the neck? The legislation of these elders will admit a candidate to the Communion, at this moment, in one thousand congregations, only under the Nazarite and Popish vow of eternal abstinence from wine; and it is blazoned for the information and admiration of all mankind, that wine is now prohibited, even on their altars, in more than eight hundred churches. My spirit went heavily within me; it was more than I could bear. Compared with such arbitrary and irresponsible tyranny, to which there can be neither law nor limit, and which may forge new oppressions to-morrow, as it has invented these but yesterday, Rome, with its fixed and ascertainable exactions, is still gloriously free.

But now the experience is told, and the conclave adjourned. There frequently remains a third ordeal to be passed, by the baptized and the unbaptized alike, before partaking of the Lord's supper. The candidate, in face of the congregation, is to answer a series of questions, embodying, in some instances, nice metaphysical subtleties, that chance to feed the controversies of the hour; while the questions themselves are sometimes extemporaneously put, but are more commonly agreed upon, under the local and joint counsels of the pastor and the elders. To produce uniformity in this particular, a living divine, whose confidence I am not betraying in stating the fact, was a few years ago employed in preparing a confession—for creed-making is not yet at an end, and will live the lifetime of Popery and Sectarianism—to be adopted by the General Assembly, for the admission of communicants throughout the Church. He proposed also—owing, I believe, the suggestion to myself—that the new formulary should clearly recognize the distinction between the unbaptized and the baptized. Such a measure was not likely to succeed; in fact, it failed.

With regard to this mode of admission to the Lord's supper, it is worthy of remark, that the whole thing is an innovation upon Presbyterianism, and although borrowed along with some other matters from the Congregationalists, within the short period of thirty years, has become almost everywhere prevalent. And the rapid spread of such a usage from parish to parish, demonstrated to my mind, many a year ago, *the conscious want, throughout the church, of a connecting link between Baptism and the Communion*, to ratify the vows and pledges of the former, and to conduct the maturing Christian to the grace and consolation of the latter. I certainly must have felt that want myself,



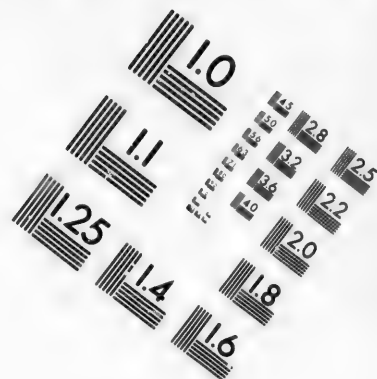
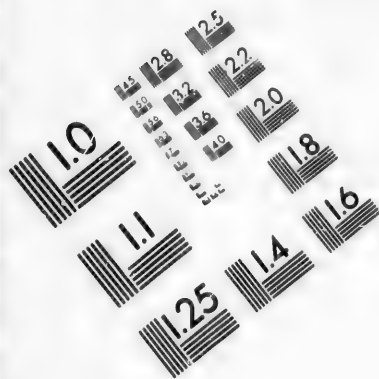
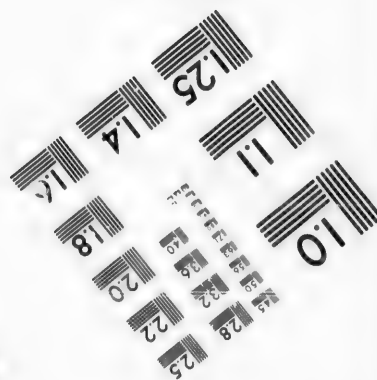
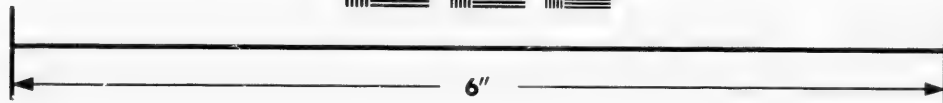
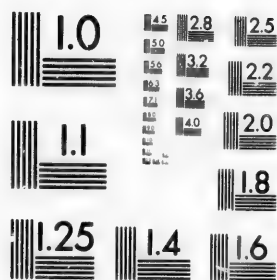
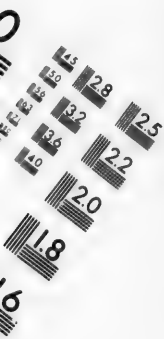


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when, thirteen years ago, in the printed formulary which I composed for the reception of new candidates to the communion, I used the following language: "*You acknowledge the responsibilities whereunto you were appointed in Baptism, in which you forever renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, and consecrated in a perpetual covenant your body soul, and spirit, &c., . . . (Assent)* This being the faith wherein you have witnessed a good confession before many witnesses, and as, from the beginning, you have been baptized into the privileges and promises of the Church Catholic, therefore I now pronounce and constitute you members of the body in which we worship the Father, and welcome you to share our grace and tribulation. And as we open before you to day the higher and wider mysteries of the kingdom in another ordinance, and *confirm you in the covenant of the faithful*, we beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, &c."

When looking in those days, at the baptized child, insensible to the responsibilities, and indifferent to the grace, accruing from his Baptism, or purposely taught, it may have been, to regard that Baptism as the lowest and mearest rite of Christianity—forgetting that Christianity has in this respect no such rites, as had the Jewish faith before it, but has merged the shadow into the substance, and rites into realities—I have been often unable to check the thought, that, if Presbyterians had retained the use of Confirmation, it would not only have answered for an edifying link between Baptism and the Communion, but it would have brought many a baptized child, year after year, into personal contact with his pastor, and would have afforded a golden opportunity, in youth's fearful crisis, for admonition, for reproof, for instruction in the dangers and responsibilities of life. It seemed reasonable—so reasonable, that

infant Baptism seemed incomplete without it, and unconnected with the after-life—by some solemn form to ask the child, now coming to the years of wisdom and discretion, "Do you abide by the terms on which you were baptized?" and, if the answer justified it, to renew the comforting assurance, that God would enlarge his grace, and most surely keep and perform the promises, which He for His part had vouchsafed to make.

About the same time, I ascertained, that Presbyterians, in portions of Germany and other countries, had not cast off the rite of Confirmation. Luther retained it, and his followers retain it still. "I sincerely wish," said Calvin, "that we retained this custom of imposition of hands, which was practised amongst the ancients." Beza and Owen and Adam Clarke speak in much the same strain. I had seen clergymen also in our own Communion, who would not have been unwilling to see the rite restored. Such facts induced me to look into the scriptural authority for this intervening ordinance between Baptism and the Holy Supper. For if any such rite be necessary for us, and if we betray our conscious want of it in the adoption of an awkward substitute, it could not have been less necessary in the times of the apostles, and we might therefore expect to find something in the word of God, beautifully intervening, as the connecting link, between the two Sacraments.

"To the law then and to the testimony"—what saith it? "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (Heb. vi. 1—2.) According to this, "*the foundation*"—"the principles of the doctrine of Christ"—what are they?

"Repentance—Faith—Baptisms—*Laying on of hands*—the Resurrection—the eternal Judgment." For the first time in my life, I here saw that Christianity had filled the vacancy between the Sacraments, and had assigned a solemn rite to its place next after Baptism—the very place to which the human invention of a confession in broad aisle had been assigned by Congregationalists and Presbyterians. First, "Repentance;" secondly, "Faith;" thirdly, "Baptisms," (whether that of John, or that of Jesus, or that of the Holy Trinity, or the doubling washing with water and the Spirit, or the trine immersion, which some allege to have been primitive,) fourthly, "*Laying on of hands*." Let me think, said I within myself;—is this the order of teaching among the Presbyterians? They teach, first, Repentance; very well; for St. Paul says, first, "*Repentance*." They teach, secondly, Faith; very well again; for St. Paul says, secondly, "*Faith*." They teach, thirdly, Baptism; very well once more; for St. Paul says thirdly, "*Baptisms*." But, at the fourth stage, St. Paul and the Presbyterians part; St. Paul says, fourthly, "*the Laying on of hands*;" Presbyterians break the chain, binding our youthful Isaacs to the altar, and our young Samuels to the temple, and cast the bright link away.

As a Presbyterian, I had nothing to gain, by supposing that ordination, was in the apostle's mind as a matter to be inculcated on a young convert next after Baptism, and in company with the tremendous doctrines, of repentance, faith, resurrection, and judgment. I came therefore to the conclusion, from which only an unnatural straining and dislocating of the passage could offer an escape, that St. Paul was speaking of the sacramental rite, or, if you please, the lesser sacrament, of Confirmation, coming next

after Baptism, and filling up one of the confessed and conscious vacancies of Calvinism. Again, my attention was struck with the fact, that Baptism, and the Laying on of hands, were, in the apostle's estimation, of sufficient excellence and dignity, to lie at "*the foundation*," and to be written down among the tremendous "*doctrines*" of "Repentance—Faith—the Resurrection—and the Judgment." What! Baptism mentioned in the same breath with Faith! the Laying on of hands raised to a correlative dignity with the Resurrection and the eternal Judgment! and both this and that lying at *the foundation*, where an apostle is deliberately reciting "*which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ!*" Make of the passage what ye will, it falls upon our ears much more like the natural utterance of the Episcopal Church, than the teaching of Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century.

But did not "the Laying on of hands" impart the gift of tongues and miracles? Yes; and it was necessary that it should; *that the Infant Church might understand, at once, the sacramental nature of the ordinance.* For the same reason, Baptism was at first, accompanied by the visible descending of a dove, that its sacramental character, the spirit brooding on the waters, might be a fixed and understood fact; so that apostles might preach, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." In like manner, Ordination was accompanied at first by the communication of the gift of miracles, even to the humblest deacon, that it might be an understood and settled principle of Christianity, that each vocation in the church should receive by the laying on of hands its proportion of grace. In the same way also, the first preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles was marked by visible and

audible effusions of the spirit, to establish the fundamental principles that the wall was broken down between the Jew and the Gentile. For the same reason, Confirmation at first had its "signs following," that the Christian, in confirming the pledges of his Baptism, might be assured of his own confirmation in grace, by a new *afflatus* of the Holy Ghost, for the higher responsibilities of the Christian life. Thus, in the city of Samaria, Philip, not the apostle, but the deacon, "one of the seven," we are told, preached to the people, and baptized a great multitude, "both men and women." More he was not empowered to do. But "when *the apostles*, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down—*laid their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost." Philip, the deacon, converted and baptized them, "both men and women;" Peter and John came down, and "laid their hands on them"—certainly not to ordain them, for it says, "both men and *women*." This was a rite that Simon Magus had never before seen; Philip had been there, preaching, baptizing, and working miracles, healing, we are told, the paralytic and the lame, and ejecting devils with wonderful success. But Simon, whom Philip baptized, and who "continued with Philip," never saw, until those that ordained the seven deacons came into Samaria, this rite of the imposition of hands. "And when Simon saw," says the narrative, "that, through laying on of *the apostles'* hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered," &c. (See Acts viii, 5-19.) We cannot see how the force of these simple facts can be evaded; and we set Confirmation down as one of the things which Presbyterianism has irrevocably lost.

Some of my ministerial brethren, I knew entertained

upon this subject a similar impression to my own. Presbyterian reviewers, I observed, and even gentlemen at Princeton, and in the Princeton Quarterly, touched tenderly upon the topic. The whole Lutheran church retained the practice. Those Protestants who had laid it aside, were already all feeling after something to supply the vacuum. I could not find, in antiquity, any beginning to this "Laying on of hands," but at the hands of the apostles. I would trace it beyond the apostles to the Jewish synagogue, where I could find it even to this day intervening between circumcision and the passover. I heard of it in the remotest East; in the heart of Abyssinia; in the fastness of Carmel and of Syria. I was glad that my children had been baptized and introduced before me into a fold, that would thus again throw its protecting shield of Confirmation around them, when they should arrive at the years of discretion and of danger.

And if I was glad in the anticipation, what tongue, shall express my happiness in the result. One of those little ones; the first that was given me, and the first that I gave the Church; is now among them that sleep in Jesus. In the glow of childhood—in her fifteenth year—an age, when among Presbyterians, the minister is avoided, and the approach of a zealous elder dreaded and shunned; she expressed the usual desire to be confirmed, at the next visitation of the Bishop. As her father was beyond the sea, her friends advised her to await his return. But, with the grace already given her, she urged her request very importunately; and it brought her at once under the teachings and counsels of a judicious and affectionate clergyman. She was accordingly confirmed, under the most gratifying appearances of sincerity and earnestness. A new measure of the spirit evidently rested upon her from that hour;

she spoke in a sweeter tongue; she led a more heavenly life: not noisy, but still; not ostentatious, but retiring; not even conscious was she of the impression made upon her heart and life, nor of that impression so sweetly reflected upon those around her. The solemn litanies of the Church were often observed to bring tears into her eyes; the church's fasts were her most pleasant feasts; morning, and evening, and at noonday, she was many a time observed to dwell long upon her knees; often was she known to retire from the midst of her young companions to the exercises of the closet; and such a life of gentleness and holiness, and self-denial, and prayer, and humble usefulness, and cheerfulness, it has never been my lot to know in one so young. And God has rewarded it. Within a year from the time that she knelt under the Bishop's hands, she entered joyfully into the rest, for which she had been unconsciously maturing; and was "so blessed, she blessed the hand of death." And often have I been consoled in the reflection that Confirmation in a father's absence, espoused her by a new vow to Christ, *just at the moment* when the world first comes to claim the virgin-heart. What a happy opportunity it gives, in all times and climes, to bring the influences of religion to bear upon youth's generous affections! The father may be far away, and the mother sleeping in the dust; yet the Church is a mother that dies never; and the time comes round, the opportunity comes up, at the most critical period of life, for the hallowed associations, Counsels, and instructions, incident to Confirmation. If I have introduced a case in illustration of this important point, it has been not without violence to my more tender recollections of a precious child; but as, in a former chapter, I had told of her Baptism, I have now, for a higher purpose, permitted myself

to record her Confirmation and her end. And, to extend the illustration, I may add, that, during the six years of my Presbyterian ministry, not an individual, so far as I can recollect, seemed drawn toward me for counsel, or attracted onward by the arrangements and natural leadings of the system, to assume the responsibilities of Baptism. If an inquirer came to me, he came not from the gentler drawings of the common influences around him, (for Calvinism knows no gentleness,) but from some sudden ictus or impulse, that happened to him alone, and left hundreds undisturbed behind him. In contrast with this, during the first six years of my ministry in the Episcopal Church, more than six hundred baptized souls have come spontaneously within my personal reach and private counsels, for the ratification of the tremendous vows of Baptism. Some of them have been among my dearest friends on earth, towards whom I might otherwise have felt a reserve in offering religious advice; and *hundreds*, I have reason to believe, have thus been brought under my secret counsels, whom otherwise I should never have reached. Really, without Confirmation, or its positive equivalent, *bringing* back the infant to the altar, not only would infant *Baptism* appear cumbered with a real difficulty, but the provisions of Christianity would seem obviously incomplete.

Let us now go back to our candidate for the Communion. He has passed the ordeals of conversion, the confession to the elders, and the open profession in the congregation. Why he is not now baptized, to signify that he is born again, I cannot understand, except on the Pelagian hypothesis, that Baptism may be lawfully administered in anticipation of a possible future event. But why the person should not be now baptized, who is loud in reiterating, I had almost said, in glorying, that his Baptism in infancy

"never did *him* any good"—a boast, and sometimes uttered in the form of challenge, which I have often heard—I leave for the elders and their minister to answer. And why the Anabaptist, who hesitates not to re-baptize an individual, though priest, prelate, or pope, may have baptized him in his infancy, on the assumption that he was baptized before he was born again or before he believed, does not *re-immers*e the grown up man, who, although he was immersed at twenty or at forty, now solemnly declares that the same mistake was perpetrated upon *him*, and that he too was immersed before he believed, and that his former immersion, so far from doing him any good, published to the world a lie, is entirely beyond my comprehension.

But to follow our candidate to the Communion. If ever in his life he felt like lying low under the droppings of that most precious blood here flowing from the cross, it is now; but prostration is forbidden him, and his knees are not allowed to come in contact with the dust. If ever he desired to draw nigh and cling to the horns of the altar, it is to-day; but he is required to sit aloof from the table of the show-bread that sheweth forth the Lord's death until He come. And, instead of receiving the emblems of his Saviour's own body and blood, from that good man's hand, who perhaps received him when a little one in the person and the name of Christ, or who has led him in after years to Christ; and, instead of hearing a paternal voice speaking in words of comfort, and uttering a pastor's blessing, he is compelled to take the hallowed elements from hands that yesterday he saw employed in the counting-room, or in the market-place, or in occupations which the dignity of my subject will not suffer me to name. If out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; if a clean

heart will naturally robe itself in a clean dress ; so a true Christianity, properly alive to the purity and dignity and majesty of that worship in which Angels and Archangels join with men, must instinctively loathe this slovenly appearance, and these familiar manners, and, if she have more beautiful garments, although she can never mistake them for the beating heart and living soul within, will surely put them on, to appear before her King.

In early life, I had, at the south, been used to see the sacramental table spread, and the guests seated decorously around it. Princeton, which should have been the last place on earth, was the very first, in which I saw the communicants receive the elements while seated in their pews. I shall never forget the violence done to my feelings, and not to mine only, but to those of several others by this spectacle ; a chill crept over me, a chill that returned as often as the festival came back ; and I felt, because it was true, although I knew it not, that the sacramental character of the solemnity was vanishing away.—Those very churches at the south, which, in my youth, or fifteen years ago, celebrated the Lord's supper with much decency and reverence around a table spread with the fair linen cloth, have been unable, even in the matter of "rue and mint and cummin," to resist the irruptions of the north-men, and have engrafted on their old, venerable forms, the rude and freezing usages of New England Congregationalism. But so it is. Downward, and downward still, is the course of a system, that has once broken away from the unalterable past. Chilly, and more chilly still, becomes the atmosphere of a body, that has once left the warm orbit to which nature had assigned it.

I had noticed, when a boy, as the communicants in successive companies approached the table, that certain indi-

viduals waited their opportunity to secure the places immediately on the pastor's right and left, that they might receive the communion immediately at his hands; thus clearly betraying the natural working of a pious instinct. Later in life I reached the question: Why not indulge the generous desire, and kneel, and receive at the pastor's hand, and with the pastor's blessing, these seals of grace? Who would feel contented that some tradesman should pour the water on his head in Baptism, while the minister should say the sacramental words? And who should feel satisfied, to receive "that bread and that cup," from a merchant's or a tradesman's hands? Does it require a high degree of Christian reverence, to feel instinctively, through every fibre of the soul, a deep repugnance to such familiarity? "Is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" We feel that the minister is the only proper individual, to impart the water in Baptism; is he not the only proper and lawful person, to impart "that bread and that cup," wherein, it will be to our everlasting condemnation, if we "discern not the Lord's body."—And why not also kneel, thought I, in the one Sacrament, as well as in the other? Adult candidates for Presbyterian baptism generally kneel. Candidates for Presbyterian ordination invariably kneel. Why not approach as near His sacred feet as I can, and kneel as lowly as I wish in receiving "the true bread from heaven," while this sacrifice of Melchizedec, the bread and the wine, show the Lord's death upon the table, and plead for my soul with a fervour and a purity, which my own prayers are incapable of approximating? If it be objected, that kneeling may beget too much reverence for the symbols, we only answer for the present, that sitting may beget the more dangerous too little. For more than a thousand years, there were

but two upon earth, that sat at the communion; one of these was the Arian, "who, denying the divinity of the Saviour, thought it not robbery to be equal with Him at His table;" the other was, and yet is, the Pope of Rome, who, claiming the same equality in another and higher, although it is fair to remember, not in the highest sense, receives the Communion on certain occasions, in the posture of the Presbyterians. Treat the symbols with irreverence, and irreverence toward Him whom they represent, will inevitably follow. Already, in this respect, are the Presbyterians where the Arians were once, and the Unitarians are now.

Again. As the Episcopal arrangements bring every child of the congregation, just at the moment when the world breaks enticingly upon his eye, and whispers his meretricious flattery into his ear, and makes her resolute descent upon his heart, into personal intimacy with his pastor, in the preparatory steps to confirmation, so does the Episcopal mode of celebrating the Holy Eucharist, bring each communicant, many times a year, under the immediate eye of his pastor, who thus possesses the invaluable opportunity of noticing the absent, of kindling anew his interest in each communicant present, and of cherishing a personal acquaintance with them all. Under such a discipline, a fact like the one already stated would have been utterly impossible, that one hundred and forty communicants, or nearly one-third of the whole number in a parish, should have been lost sight of, from the recollections of the elders of the whole body of parishioners.—But so it ever is; under the workings of a true system, every thing falls naturally into its place, and harmony and beauty and propriety are in all its parts; the machine regulates itself; the jar is not felt; anarchy is impossible.—

And, when the little things of a church, as we may perhaps consider them, like the joints and bands of the body, seem to be fitly framed together and to fill the very place that without them would be unseemly blanks, and to perform their minute offices in mutual and self-adjusting harmony, it would appear, that, as in Ezekiel's vision, "the spirit of a living creature was among the whole.

And when the painful necessity for discipline arises, although it be for sins that should not be named, Congregational Presbyterianism invests the whole body of communicants—male and female—young men and maidens—the wise and the unwise—the silent and the gossiping—with the equal right of investigating and pronouncing; while a numerous eldership, according to the theory of Presbyterians proper, neutralizes but a portion of this evil. How much more likely to be salutary are the private "admonitions" and "repellings" of Episcopacy. And under the Episcopal regimen, if an appeal be taken, it is conducted with the same delicacy and consideration, and with greater probabilities of rectifying mistakes, up to the Bishop; whereas, among Presbyterians, it must be dragged into open Presbyteries, and thence to Synods, and thence again to General Assemblies, where hundreds of ministers lost hundreds of days, in adjusting some petty wrong, or in adjusting a neighbourhood quarrel, in some remote and miserable village. And any attempt, such as an eminent divine among them has suggested, to arrest these appeals at the lower courts, is but an interference with the liberties of the people, and a departure from the Presbyterian theory. We shall not in this place notice that feature of Presbyterianism, which all jurists have established as the definition and essence of tyranny, and which places the sword, the sceptre, and the purse in the same hands;

and combines the legislative, the judicial, and the executive functions, in the same body; so that the General Assembly for example, is, at the same moment, legislature, jury, judge, executive and executioner.

The Confession of Faith declares, that "to the officers of the Church the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require." Rome itself has scarcely a more terrific form of anathema than that which Knox, the reformer, devised, nor a more soothing absolution than the two, which the curious in such matters may see in the Liturgy which he prepared for the adoption of the Presbyterians in Scotland, but which ultimately fell of course, into disuse. But, now, the individual, thus assailed by a church censure, may laugh at the elders for their pains, and "join" some other of the sects which lie so numerously about his door. What is to prevent him? They are all "churches"—standing on the same basis of private judgment—equally pure; equally spiritual; equally free. Every day this evasion is actually practiced. I once knew a man, who, having lost a sum of money, was induced to consult one of those gifted individuals, that, not two centuries ago would have graced the stake or the gallows upon the shores of Massachusetts Bay. The good lady gave him information certainly very remarkable, and ventured some predictions, afterward most singularly verified. With this, however, my story has nothing to do. But out of the occurrence, an offence grew up, which made it necessary for the Presbyterian clergyman to excommunicate some two or three persons. The very day and hour of their excommunica-

tion, they were immersed by a Baptist preacher, and received triumphantly to the communion. A few years afterward, the same individuals were excommunicated by their new brethren, and became, and are now, members of the Campbellite sect, "in good and regular standing." Thus are the keys so held among the sects, that as one door of the kingdom is shut, another may be immediately opened.

This result of sectarian discipline is not varied, by enlarging the sphere of its operation. For, within a few years, we have seen whole synods, embracing sixty thousand communicants, "excinded" from the Presbyterian church, and forthwith investing themselves anew with all the prerogatives of a Church of God. An ejected Presbytery, a Presbytery still; an excinded Synod, a Synod still; an excommunicated Church, a Church still; standing on the conceded basis of private judgment—*totas teres atque rotunda*—equally pure; equally scriptural; equally competent to hold the keys; and with plenary right and plenary power, to originate a ministry, and celebrate sacraments, as valid as if the twelve apostles had risen from their graves, and had laid on them their consecrating hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

LITURGIES.

However well-proportioned I might have found the Episcopal Church in its structure: however safe-guarded against the outbreaks of fanaticism, and the incursions of heresy; however high her walls, or beautiful her gates, or strong her towers; however studded her whole frame-work with the inscriptions of the earliest ages: although on every portal I should have seen a martyr's name, and on every column the handwriting of an Ignatius or a Polycarp; yet I may confess, that all this symmetry and beauty, if it were possible that they should exist as a body without a spirit, ought to a devout mind, to present no irresistible attraction, if, upon closer inspection, the interior arrangements were found unfriendly to the great end to which every thing else in the temple must be secondary and subservient—the high and pure devotions of the heart. As in human friendships, we value not the lip's cold word without the heart's warm love, so, with an emphasis beyond comparison, as "God is a Spirit," "they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." But I have supposed a thing impossible. It cannot be, that

"On the cold cheeks of Death smiles and roses are blending."

Such symmetry and beauty as we have described, are the results of a life within; as the beautiful flower is the spontaneous evolution of a healthy seed, or as the proportions of a fair edifice are the developments of cultivated thought and feeling, or as the beauty and perfection of the material body are but the natural expression of an instinc-

tive and vigorous life. As Nature however, ever seels a clothing verdant, bright, radiant with its Maker's image, so a true Christianity will lay aside the swaddling-clothes for the robe without seam, and in all that is external will exhibit strength, symmetry and beauty. I can, however, recal the time when Episcopacy was, to me, "the sepulchre, beautiful indeed, without, but full within," if not of Death's corruption, at least of Death's cold chill, and stiffened form; when lip-service and Episcopacy were as much convertible terms as Presbyter and Bishop were, in the New Testament. But this was at a time when I set a less relative value upon the worship of the sanctuary, than I have been led by God's blessing, since to do; at a time when I knew less of Episcopalians than I came, by God's Providence, afterward to know; at a time when I had not carefully observed the workings of the human mind with reference to liturgical worship, nor the influences of liturgical worship upon the human mind. If I found myself, or if I found others unprofited, or often pained and injured, by the crudities and defects of extemporaneous worship, to have sought relief in the Episcopal Liturgy, would, to me, have seemed like stepping from the regions of an occasional north wind, upon a zone of everlasting ice. Let me, then, conduct the reader along the line of reflection which brought me to the conclusion, that, agreeably to the analogies of the faith, as grace comes down to man, robed in the Sacraments and the Word in an external Ministry, and Christianity itself in the written Scriptures, so a permanent devotion will inevitably clothe itself in an abiding Liturgy.

I might here, at the outset, entrench myself behind a host of mighty names, that, having used a Liturgy through all their lives had every opportunity to know its value, and

have left a testimony which the Rev. Mr. Staunton has thus condensed: "Blame us not, then, if we value our Liturgy; it embodies the anthems of saints; it thrills the heart with the dying songs of the faithful; it is hallowed with the blood of the martyrs; it glows with sacred fire." I prefer to throw into the fore-ground of my argument the testimony of Presbyterians themselves.

Even Mr. Barnes, in a candid moment, and before his eulogium (of which we quote but a small part) had led any of his flock to seek our green pastures and our still waters, permitted himself to say, "We have always thought that there are Christian minds and hearts, that would find more edification in the forms of worship in that Church than in any other. We have never doubted that many of the purest flames of devotion that rise from the earth, ascend from the altars of the Episcopal Church, and that many of the purest spirits that the earth contains, minister at those altars, or breathe forth their prayers and praises in language consecrated by the use of piety for centuries."

The New-York Christian Observer, the representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in this country, says of the Episcopal Church, "Her spirit-stirring Liturgy, and a scrupulous adherence to it, have under God, preserved her integrity beyond any denomination of Christians since the Reformation."

Says a Scottish Presbyterian, the Rev. John Cummings, "I shall never forget how thrilling I felt one clause in the English Liturgy, on my first entering an Episcopal Church. It is perhaps the finest sentence and the sweetest prayer in the language:—'In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death and in the Day of Judgment, Good Lord, deliver us.'"

Dr. Doddridge, an English Presbyterian and Expositor, says, "The language is so plain as to be level to the capacity of the meanest, and yet the sense is so noble, as to raise the capacity of the highest."

Dr. Clarke, the distinguished Commentator of the Methodists, declares it "superior to every thing of the kind produced either by ancient or modern times; several of the prayers and services of which were in use from the first ages of Christianity." "The Liturgy," he says again, "is almost universally esteemed by the devout and pious of every denomination, and, next to the translation of the Scriptures into the English language, is *the greatest effort of the Reformation*. As a form of devotion, it has no equal in any part of the universal Church of God. *Next to the Bible, it is the Book of my understanding and my heart.*"

Robert Hall, the brightest light that ever shone among the Baptists, and one that would have been bright in any firmament, confesses, that "the *evangelical purity* of its sentiments, the *chastened fervour* of its devotions, and the *majestic simplicity* of its language, have combined to place it in *the very first rank* of uninspired compositions."

The heavenly-minded Baxter, another non-conformist, whose writings have prepared hundreds for that "saint's everlasting rest" which gave title to one of his choice productions, says, "The constant disuse of forms is apt to breed giddiness in religion, and to make men hypocrites, who shall delude themselves with conceits that they delight in God, when it is but in those novelties and varieties of expression that they are delighted; and therefore I advise forms, to fix Christians, and to make them sound," As Mr. Wesley for the Methodist, so Baxter prepared a Liturgy for the Non-conformists; and, like Wesley, he sought the consolations of the Church's Liturgy in the hour

of death. And Watson, a Methodist divine, as great as either of these, said, just as his soul took wing for Paradise, "Read the *Te Deum*; it seems to unite one in spirit, with the whole Catholic Church on earth and in heaven.

Let these suffice, after the addition of one testimony more. The Princeton Review, in a notice of Mr. Barnes's "Position of the Evangelical Party in the Episcopal Church,"—a work written, I am informed, *after* some members of his congregation had gone over to that Church, as the eulogium above quoted was written some months *before*, holds the following language:—"It is well for the Church of England that she has a Liturgy, which brings out so clearly the doctrines of depravity, atonement, justification, Divine influence, and a future judgment. What would have become of these doctrines in the lips of worldly Ministers, &c.? Facts," it goes on to say "are against this favourite position of Mr. Barnes, (*viz.*, that the observance of forms is incompatible with the preservation of evangelical piety.)" And, after reminding Mr. Barnes that God was himself the author of the forms in the Jewish Church, the Reviewer adds—"But to say, that a form of prayer, merely as a form however evangelical, is destructive of piety, is to assert that the Gospel is not the Gospel, if it be read instead of being spoken." "Not that we object," said the Princeton Review of the year preceding, "to devotional composition, when happily exerted and wisely employed; on the contrary, we would wish that it were more common than it is."

With this amount of testimony, which could easily be multiplied into a volume, I am asked the question, Why is the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church so little esteemed, out of its own pale? I answer, simply because it is not known. The Wesleyans of England know it, and, to this day they use it, at least once every Sunday of their lives. Other

Dissenters there know it, and they use it in many of their chapels at this hour. It requires one, two, perhaps three generations to become insensible to the fascinations of a Liturgy. Calvin left for his disciples a Liturgy. Luther composed for his followers a Liturgy. Knox prepared a Liturgy for the people of Scotland. Baxter compiled a Liturgy for the Nonconformists. Wesley enjoined a Liturgy upon his followers. Twice, in the Scottish Kirk, did the Presbyterians adopt a Liturgy. Nothing but time and habit, or violent convulsion, can tear a Christian from his Liturgy. The separation once effected, a Prayer-Book becomes, to a Presbyterian, what the Bible is to the Papist—*an unknown book*; uncared for, unadmired, unread.—Such was the Prayer-Book to me; and I probably regarded it with much the same aversion or indifference that the Romanist entertains towards the Bible, and for very nearly the same reason. Let the Bible be thrown into the way of the Romanist, as the Prayer-book came into mine, and if he do not learn to admire, and venerate, and love and cherish it as I did the Prayer-book, it will not be owing to any want in the sacred volume, either of intellectual sublimity or of moral loveliness. There must be, in ordinary circumstances, not only a taste, but an educated and cultivated taste, to appreciate beauty in a landscape, grace in a statue, refinement in manners, elegance in literature, force in eloquence, melody in music, purity in morals, and, to come to the point in hand, perfection in worship. Time, or opportunity at least, must be allowed, to correct and adapt the taste. It is impossible to rise, at a bound, from the impression that the sermon is the summum bonum for which we turn our feet towards the sanctuary, into the feeling—not new, I apprehend, to the heart of the veriest worldling among the Episcopalians—that, when we go within thy gates, O Zion, it is to worship God. It is not possible, from the heavy

dull common-places of an extemporaneous prayer, which it is enough to have heard once, to rise by a single effort, to the dignity of a Liturgy, which, to be adequately admired must be heard a thousand times. It is impossible to settle down, from the fitful, feverish and momentary flights of the revival and the camp-ground, into the chastened and life-long fervour of the incomparable Liturgy. My own case may show.

Owing to the distance of any other place of worship, I was sent, in my boyhood, once a fortnight, to the Episcopal Church. But I went without the necessary guide to my devotions, and from a home, at which, among a thousand pious volumes, I do not recollect that I ever saw the Book of Common Prayer. I did not therefore learn, in childhood, so much as to "find the places," or to take part in the responses, or even to perceive that sacred amusement, if I may so call it, by which the varied service, as I have often since remarked, engages so easily the attention of the child of the Church. For, while an extemporaneous prayer from a pulpit, often as elevated as the ceiling will well permit, fails, and must fail to give employment to the mind of a child, there is something in Liturgical worship, when properly performed, strikingly adapted, as experience teaches, to occupy the mind and hands and lips, and through all these, the heart of the little ones of Christ, and thus, to form, from the age of infancy, the great habit of devotion. We accept, therefore most thankfully, the tribute sometimes paid to the Church, that her worship is well enough for the childish and illiterate. Like the Bible, it is a study for the learned, and yet giveth wisdom to the simple. Its language is, in part, literally the language of angels, and is yet within the comprehension of infants. It is a sun that will blind the gaze of the philoso-

pher, but yet giveth light to the greatest and the least in the kingdom of heaven. It is as an atmosphere, full of wonders to the spiritual chemist, but feeding alike the life of the wise and of the unwise. Its alleluias of the Cherubim and Seraphim ; its hosannas, the hosannas in which babes and sucklings perfect and echo back the praise. We think with Robert Hall, that its simplicity is its majesty. All this we should not dare to say of a mere human composition. But the Prayer-Book is not a human composition ; nineteen-twentieths of its language are taken, line by line, and word for word, from that volume which has the mysterious power to chain the understanding of a patriarch, and to charm the heart of a child. A Gabriel may desire to look into its pages ; a Timothy may lisp them at his mother's knee.

For the want of teaching in childhood, I was in after-life, entirely at a loss when to stand, or when to sit, or when to kneel, or where to " find the places." The same is the general complaint of Presbyterians, and is the reason in most cases, why they find the service not only unedifying, but embarrassing and painful, and why they leave the sanctuary with a growing prejudice against our Liturgy. Being myself seldom able to catch the responses of the people, as they were so often mouthed and mumbled, I had half the time unfinished sentences to dwell upon, more likely to distract attention, than to fix devotion. And as the Presbyterian goes to an Episcopal Church from the same motive with which he frequents his own, not so much to be heard in the outpourings of his own heart, as to hear the declamation of the preacher—of course, the whole service before the sermon is unedifying and irksome. I was myself nearly thirty years of age before I could find the Psalms for the day, or the Epistle and Gospel, or could lay

my finger on the *Te Deum*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, or the *Litany*.

Notwithstanding that I heard the Episcopal service under these disadvantages, I could not but notice, that the oftener I frequented it, the more it gained upon my heart. I could see nothing irreverent, to offend the eye. I could hear nothing, beneath the dignity of worship, to offend the ear. I heard large portions of Scripture, and the low concert of many voices, indicating that they were concerned in what was going on, and that they felt they had an individual part and right in the exalted service—that it was not sectarian eloquence which they had come as dumb Christians to *hear*, nor a mass-house pageant which they had come as speechless spectators to *see*.

As a Presbyterian, I felt certainly a little flattered by a tradition—I cannot now remember where I met with it—that, at the Reformation, the Presbyterians occupied so entirely every square inch with their serried hosts, that there was, in fact, not room to kneel, and that thence had arisen the custom of standing in prayer. But now that our ranks were not so crowded, I fell back into the instinctive feeling, that a sinner's place, before the Maker of the universe, is on his knees.

If kneeling be an aid to devotion in the closet, why may not its aid be permitted in the sanctuary? If kneeling be proper in our families, why is it not desirable where meet the visible and invisible of the one family in earth and heaven? If kneeling be thought indicative of life in the social meeting, why should it be abolished in the great congregation? The Saviour of the world lay low on the chill earth in prayer; why should I not bend the knee upon the cushioned floor? Such an one as Paul knelt on the bare ground at the water-side; why should not such an

one as I kneel down within the warm and pleasant sanctuary? Even Solomon in his glory "arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees;" why should not I with all my miseries, fall down as low as he?

I have seen this instinct frequently betray itself in a Presbyterian congregation. In time of a revival, when there is indication certainly of deep impressions of the Divine presence; when the creature sinks into nothingness before Him; I have seen (and the same has been seen in a thousand places) the preacher kneeling in the pulpit; the suppliant kneeling in the pew; the "anxious seat" thronged with kneeling companies in presence of a kneeling minister; crowded prayer-meetings morning and night, where all could find "room to kneel;" and the most palpable proof, in vast assemblies prostrate on the floor, that *kneeling* or *prostration* is the posture indicated by the earnest mind in the presence of its God. Heathens, Mahomedans, Papists, Jews, all stand around Him while they praise, and fall down before Him while they pray. Presbyterians—and they alone in earth or heaven—sit down to praise, sit down to pray! Long will they search in the Scriptures for a license to this strange familiarity and—let me say the word—this positive *indecentcy*. They will there find, perhaps some standing, many they will find kneeling, others they will find prostrate in the dust, but none will they find sitting. And so indissolubly is the true idea of worship associated with prostration, that Presbyterian poetry swells above Presbyterian usage,—

"Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees."

St. John has lifted the veil from the upper sanctuary and shows us four and twenty elders falling down before Him, and the universe of angels casting their wings into the dust

and falling on their face around Him, as they present the vials with the prayer of the saints, or else fill the high vault above them with the song that is always new. How amazing the descent from such a scene into the midst of a company of mortals, separated at a distance measureless and well-nigh returnless from the favor and patience of God, against whom heaven's gates were once hopelessly shut; who are suspended by a hair over everlasting burnings, and who see the Son of God himself upon his knees in awful vigils for their safety, yet coolly sitting down when they praise, sitting or lozing on their seats when they pray! I have a thought—*an eloquar, an sileam*—let me say, I mean by it no uncharitable judgment of my fellow-creatures, I infer it mainly from the sactarian principle on my own mind—it is this: that *the system is incapable of producing a degree of reverence which may properly be said to amount to worship*. The whole theory of free-thinking reducing everlasting and boundless truths within the span of human reason, and in its extreme results refusing to acknowledge the Infinite *because He is infinite*, the unsearchable, *because He is unsearchable*, God *because He is God*—the whole theory, and the silent influence of the system are injurious and in the end fatal to all reverence, and make the awful worship, which the Church Catholic has ever retained, a simple impossibility. That worship based on conceptions of the Divine nature, now almost lost among sectarians, is to be reached only from some different starting point. I feel certain that under the influences of that system, I never could have risen to that awe with which I am now taught to fall before Him, and from which, as from some "scale whose lowest round is planted on the skies," I behold an immeasurable expanse between the creature and the Creator, which is but the opening of another and another, and yet another,

which lie in interminable series between the frail child of dust and Him from whose hand he came. It may be doubted whether God, as conceived of under a sectarian, free-thinking system, and so irreverently regarded and approached, be not a creation rather than the Creator of the creature. God has been known many an age to the Church; yet late in the nineteenth century, as if the world still slept, we see a writer in the columns of the New York Observer introducing an *argument* (!) advocating the propriety of *kneeling before Him*, with this extraordinary language: "The question as to the proper and appropriate posture to be assumed in the solemn duty of prayer, is one that *has begun* to awaken the attention of the *Christian public*."

For many years, while yet a Presbyterian, I often attended Episcopal worship on the week day festivals, and often even on the Sunday have I gone "by night," when the labors of a weary day were over; and it was with me, as it has been with many, that the oftener I went, the oftener I was compelled to go, where "honor and majesty were before Him, and strength and beauty were in His sanctuary." As yet I had not the remotest expectation of ever being numbered among "the children of the elect lady." Only I envied the sparrow her house, and the swallow her nest, and although I might not stay there myself, I *did* lay my young at thine altars, O Lord, my King, and my God! But back to the miserable, empty, off-hand worship of my sect, like St. Paul to the body, I was obliged to go, less fitted to endure its husks and its inanity than I was before. Say, is it possible for the most gifted mind *extempore*, in the presence of a promiscuous assembly to hit upon thought and language adequate to all the high purposes of worship? If I ask the question, it is because all my recollections would compel me to doubt.

As I know that, in better days in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, two books of public prayer were at different times set forth, so I have observed that in the heart of that Church, there is at this moment, a throbbing for their re-adoption. I know it from their own lips, that many of the Presbyterian clergy in this country admit, feel and, among themselves, deplore the vacuum which the loss of a Liturgy has left, and would gladly restore a written form, if the downward tendencies of the system and of the times allowed; a form not indeed to be invariably binding, this were incompatible with their ideas of liberty and gifts and inspiration: but to be of discretionary use, and of occasional obligation. But as experience has shown that the very reading of the Scriptures, when left to the discretion of the minister, has fallen into sad neglect, as has been proven by history, that Liturgies, when entrusted to the same discretion, fall into disuse, and even into oblivion.

But having heard these unavailing regrets for the lost forms of worship, from some of the most distinguished of my former brethren, and having heard the like sentiments falling, even at Princeton, from "those that sit in Moses's seat," it is not strange that gradually the suspicion grew upon me, that, in this respect, also, namely, the great ends and uses of all religious worship, Episcopacy had a most enviable advantage. I was, too often for my peace and comfort, disquieted and grieved by the so called devotions to which I was compelled to *listen*; their irreverent familiarity; their cold and wordy emptiness; their forced ejaculations; their sluggish drawl; the thousand blemishes, defects, redundancies, extravagancies of their off-hand homage with which we were taught to approach a Being in whose sight the heavens are dark, and the angels chargeable with folly.

But it is now so long since I was conversant with the evils which it is desirable to forget, that I shall refresh my memory by a method that will exempt me from all suspicion of drawing on my own imagination. The Boston Recorder has long been the organ of orthodoxy, in a community of great intellectual and moral elevation, and may be supposed to be quite competent, from its ample furniture of facts and from its own cultivated tastes, to express a judgment in the premises. The editor, whose language I shall not materially alter, but shall be obliged in some cases to abridge, puts forth the following as "*some faults of public prayers.*" He does not notice, it will be observed, the blemishes of social worship, where the brethren indiscriminately try their "gifts." His remarks have exclusive reference to the classic ground and higher dignities of the pulpit and an educated ministry.

"Some of the faults of public prayers are the following :

1. *Doctrinal* prayers, or prayers designed to inculcate certain doctrines, which are regarded by the speaker as essential or important. Should a prayer be thus converted into a sermon ?

2. *Historical* prayers, in which are comprised long narratives for the information of persons not acquainted with the detail of the facts referred to. But is narrative the business of prayer ?

3. *Hortatory* prayers, intended to stir up the zeal of the congregation, in regard to some particular subject or enterprise, which at the moment may be thought interesting.

4. *Denunciatory* prayers, designed to warn the audience against certain errors or practices, to put down certain sentiments, or to awaken towards them indignant feelings, being appeals to men, not addresses to God." Fire from heaven is constantly invoked ; temperance, abolition, re-

vivals, missions, any thing will furnish fuel for the passion ; and the lash of a ' local public opinion,' manufactured, perhaps, in some miserable village, is mercilessly applied to some penitent individual or class of individuals in prayer. Innumerable instances tread one upon another in my memory ; but it is needless to recite them. Now let the variances, emulations, and strifes of Episcopalians be what they may, we keep them out of our devotions ; hence, when sectarians look on, expecting to see us the next moment separate in schism, ' we have an altar ' where strife cannot come ; we forget our differences at the throne of grace and prayer ; ' with one mouth ' still keeps us one.

" 5. *Personal* prayer, which springs from a desire to administer a secret rebuke, or to bestow commendation, some individual being expressly in the mind of the person praying." How often have I heard the praises of a dead minister or deacon follow him, like the chanting of a requiem, from the pulpit, proclaiming to the Almighty the dead man's title to canonization. How often have I heard a visiting clergyman eloquent in eulogiums upon the blushing or unblushing pastor of a congregation, whose virtues and usefulness were represented to the Lord as reasons why his invaluable life or health should be prolonged ! How often have I heard the pastor himself enumerate the merits of some elder or wealthy and generous individual now dangerously ill ; and how often have I imagined that the enumeration of the good qualities of some dying woman fell upon her ears like the anointing of oil, and actually raised her up, or, if it failed in this result, had all the virtue of an " extreme unction " to soothe the pains of her departure. Contrasted with all this, how grave, and dignified, unexceptionable, and sufficient, are the varied prayers of the Episcopal Liturgy for the sick, and the impres-

sive service by which the dead are committed to the dust ; for so the greatest tragedian of this age, when asked what was the noblest composition in the English language, is said to have replied, "*the burial service of the Church of England.*" But let our Reviewer proceed.

"6. *Eloquent* prayers, in which there is a display of a brilliant fancy and of polished and elegant language, compelling the hearer to say, ' what a fine prayer that was.'"

"7. *Familiar* prayers, in which there is an evident absence of that sacred awe and reverence which should fill the mind in every approach to God." This is a miserable canker, but, strange to say, has been often interpreted as a note of high spirituality, entitling the individual as the phrase is, to "draw very near." "What liberty," said the man worshipping elder, "our pastor had in praying this morning." "Why yes," replied the Churchman, "I must say I think he took very great liberties"

"8. *Sectarian* prayers, indicating very clearly an attachment to a particular sect among the multitude of Christian denominations." In contrast with this feature of public prayer, which is capable of being made singularly offensive, how chaste is the spirit of the Church's Liturgy, which although it "might have whereof to glory," yet vaunteth not itself, but remembereth only in her prayers "the holy Church throughout all the earth," and "all that profess and call themselves Christians," and requireth of her priests to bear all the tribes of Zion on their hearts before the Lord, as the Jewish high priest bore upon his breast the names, in precious stones, of the twelve tribes of Israel.

"9. *Long* prayers, which weary and exhaust the 'spirit of devotion.'" Whitfield is remembered to have said, "Brother, you prayed me into a good flame, and you

prayed me out of it again." And we know how quaint has become the appellation, of "the long prayer," or the prayer before the sermon, in some portions of the country. The Episcopal Liturgy is not, to one engaged in its worship, liable to this objection, although to a dumb spectator it may be irksome. There is an animation and variety about it; and there are intervals and rests provided, which entirely preclude the fatigue incident to a long and continuous prayer.

Here endeth the editorial lesson. Ah me! if these are but "some of the faults," and such faults as these must be endured in bright New England, and in her classic capital and from an educated and accomplished ministry, what must be the insufferable corruptions of public worship and of the very idea of Divine worship among the illiterate and extravagant sects that swarm over the land.

As the *catalogue raisonnée* of the Boston Recorder is professedly incomplete, we will take leave to continue it.

10. *Self-laudatory* prayers, heard chiefly from the agents of societies, which enter regularly into the work of reciting the merits of a particular society, or the self-denying labors of some devoted band of Sunday-school teachers, or Tract-visitors, or Scripture-readers, or the noble sacrifices about to be made by some embarking missionaries, or the wonderful successes of some particular branch of operations in which it is understood the speaker has borne a conspicuous part—*quorum magna pars fui*.

"And all, in turn, essay to paint
The rival merits of their saint;
—For, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own."

11. *Un-English* prayers, in which uncouthness of expression, and carelessness of composition, offend the ear, and unfit the mind for worship.

12. *Short* prayers, abridged and hurried, to make room for the sermon.

13. *Blundering* prayers, in which the recalling of words, and the remodelling of half-finished sentences and embarrassed pauses, constantly occur, so painful to the worshipper, and so fatal to devotion.

14. *Verbose* or wordy prayers, remarkable for the quantity of words and the paucity and meagreness of devotional ideas.

15. *Eccentric* prayers, tainted with the sometimes intolerable eccentricities of the individual who happens to make them.

16. *Unforgiving* prayers; for I have heard the remark from persons who have been half their lifetime attendants on extemporaneous worship, that they never heard, in a Calvinistic congregation, a prayer for the forgiveness of their enemies.

17. *Defective* prayers, which not only exclude some particular petitions, but which omit some essential element of devotion, such as the confession of sin, the act of faith, the offering of thanks, the oblation of alms, the recognition of the Holy Trinity, even the mention of the name of Jesus. It is impossible, under the most urgent circumstances, that all the elements of proper worship, can be combined by an impromptu dash of the most gifted mind, hurrying on to the one great thing—the sermon.

18. *Common-place* prayers, repeating, till they lose all meaning, the same trite and tiresome thoughts in certain worn-out phrases and matter-of-course quotations; that “we deserve to be made as miserable as we have made ourselves sinful;” that “others were as good by nature and better by practice than ourselves;” that “sinners

may be convicted and converted ; " that " multitudes may be heard inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward," that " Zion may lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes ; " and that, finally, the Lord would " bless all for whom we are in duty bound to pray."

19. *Intellectual* prayers, by which the speaker seldom fails to intimate that he is versed in all the metaphysical logomachies and miserable subtleties of the hour. I recollect, that in presence of perhaps as large a congregation as ever assembled in New York, a Presbyterian minister, in his prayer, first entered fully into the nature of the ability which he would *not* ask the Lord to grant the sinners then present, and which it was alleged they possessed sufficiently already ; and that he then defined, with logical precision, the exact thing which he had it in his own mind that the Lord should grant.

20. *Theatrical* prayers, accompanied by painful gestures and grimaces, the latter resulting perhaps from the (unscriptural) custom of shutting the eyes, and of making at the same time a mental effort, under the unpleasant consciousness that the people are looking at the speaker.

21. *Bombastic* prayers, which approach the Majesty of Heaven with a solemn grandiloquence, familiar to an oriental court.

22. *Declamatory* prayers, where the voice becomes excited to a fatiguing pitch, and often strung to a complete falsetto.

23. *Objurgatory* prayers, in which the pastor imputes, in an offensive manner, before the Lord, the low condition of his parish, and the departure and absence of the Spirit, and the cessation of conversions, to the unbelief and other sins of the people.

24. *Inaccurate* prayers—inaccurate in facts, quotations, reasonings and the like. A prayer was once made in my own congregation, giving the intelligence, that, "Thou hast taught us in thy holy word, man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long." I have shown, in another place, that the ablest divine may make a mistake of years in acquainting the Almighty with the age of a young clergyman.

25. *Presumptuous* prayers, petitioning for favors that it would be miraculous to grant, or thanking the Lord for the ascertained conversion of such and such, or for the undoubted translation of some deceased individual into His presence in Heaven, or for mercies that imply the prying into "those things that are not convenient."

26. *Political* prayers, that, even if they do not give offence to a party, yet are certain to put the politician on the *qui vive* to discover the political opinions of the minister.

A little reflection must make it obvious, that these evils are unavoidable, under the system by which they are generated. If a minister is to pray *ex tempore*—much more, if he is to pray *ab imo pectore*—unless he be endowed with rare discretion, to distinguish the promptings of passion and private feeling from the movings of a better spirit, his prayers must inevitably take color from the objects and influences around him. In times of agitation and violence, he cannot touch them without being drawn unduly, albeit, imperceptibly, after them: in times of spiritual declension and dearth, his prayers will move in the same sluggish current: in times of fanaticism and inflated zeal, his prayers must savor of the reigning extravagance: in times of heresy and of dangerous and doubtful disputations, his prayers will lie in the current of these subtleties and

novelties, or else be painfully directed against them: in times of religious strife or of political convulsion, his prayers will be still infected by the prevailing leaven of uncharitableness and party discord; and party discord is never consummated, until it has become identified with "conscience," and, in another cant phrase, has "been made a subject of prayer." It is not in human nature to escape this snare. I care not how dignified the pulpit, or how good the man, the prayer will be graduated, as a rising or falling thermometer, to the religious *opinions* and the religious *fervor* of the times. The great regulator is wanting — a standing liturgy — to bind the clergyman, and to protect the devotions of the people, to day, from the strange fire that a heated imagination would bring to the altar, and to-morrow, from the cold nothings which would be offered up upon it. The Presbyterian, accustomed to the flaying process of such sluggish, jejune, drowsy prayers, as may be heard at any time, but especially in a country parish, or on a summer's afternoon, can hardly conceive with what amazing force the contrast strikes an Episcopalian ear, educated to the true harmonies of devotion. It was Wordsworth or Coleridge, I believe, who remarked, that he never so felt the sublimity and sweetness of the Church's liturgy, as, on returning to his parish Church, from a sojourn in a country place in Scotland, where he had been doomed to listen one or two Sundays to the extemporaneous effusions of a Scottish minister.

It is certainly worthy of remark, that not one of the more than twenty faults that have been enumerated, nor of as many more that might be named, can be alleged against the Episcopal Liturgy. Yet, within its compass, not a perfection of the Divine Being, but is becomingly adored; not a doctrine of the Divine word, but is pro-

claimed upon the housetops; not a bounty of Divine Providence but is thankfully rehearsed; not a want of human nature but is affectingly spread out; not a relation in life, but has its turn to be considered; not a class or condition of society but is charitably remembered; not a traveller in the wilderness, not a voyager upon the wave, not a widow in her grief, not an orphan on her knee, not an infant at the breast, not a prisoner or captive in his cell is forgotten; all who are in any trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or other adversity, are cared for and prayed for; the absent and the distant, with all the Church visible, are remembered; the cherished dead and the Church invisible are not forgotten; and angels, and archangels, and all the company of Heaven are recognized and are admitted to the worship.

On entering the sanctuary, after doing silent reverence before the symbol of the Divine Presence, we hear, first of all, some sentences from God's holy Word, inviting us to prayer. The pastor then, not lifted high above us, but standing as a sinner in our midst, exhorts us earnestly to join in the devotions. Then follows the deep-toned confession of our sins, with the consoling absolution of the penitent, which joyful message of forgiveness is immediately followed by the voices of all present uttering that sweet prayer of children taken back to favor, "Our Father who art in Heaven." Then follow the lauds and praises of the people, not in the words of human rhymsters, but in the words that inspired the harp of David, and even in the manner in which, on the banks of the Red Sea, in the temple at a later day, and in the synagogue until this hour, the people and the priests, or the people alone, answered and still answer one another, "by course." Then follow the Psalms, in such portions, that those delightful compositions

are gone entirely through, once a month. We then listen to a well selected chapter from *Moses and the Prophets*, which is followed by the noble *Te Deum*, which has earned the admiration, and swelled the devotions of the Church for more than a thousand years, or the rich *Benedicite*.—When this is done, we hear a lesson from the New Testament, corresponding in its drift, with the one chosen from the old. We then repeat our simple faith, as the Apostle's creed has transmitted it from the earliest ages. After which we join in the prayers, thanksgivings, and litanies of the occasion. Then, after a psalm and special preparatory act of invocation, we listen next upon our knees, to the Commandments, each of which we accompany with prayer for grace to "incline our hearts to keep this law." We then sit down and hear a part of some Epistle in which an inspired Apostle inculcates some of the precepts of the Christian life, and immediately afterward, in the attitude of servants standing to hear their Lord, we stand (for the same reason that we bow at the name of Jesus,) and listen to a portion of the holy Gospel, in which the Saviour himself speaks personally, and is always prominent. The Gospel and Epistle both are chosen in harmony with the lessons from the Scriptures, and all have bearing generally on some high doctrine or important precept of revelation, made prominent by the arrangements of the Church for the particular day. "In all which," we ask, with the great Hooker, "what is there which the wit of man can improve?"

After such devotions, it is not to be wondered at, that the preacher does not lapse into "endless genealogies," and "the oppositions of science, falsely so-called," or into Gnostic and Neologic vagaries, and the subtleties of intellectual learning, or into the contentions of conflicting schools

and the heretical and startling novelties of some last author he has read. Nor is it strange, that the laity, under such tuition, become familiar with the notes of the ancient faith, as they become inspired with the breathings of the ancient worship, and that, unlike the Athenian sects around them "who spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing," they are little swayed by the dogmas and "private interpretations of the preacher," and in all matters of religion, look upon any thing "new" with distrust, and deprecate the fond conceit of "development" in Christianity, whether it hatch its wretched brood in New England or in Rome. They may not become exact theologians under the teachings of the ancient creeds and Liturgies; but, with this milk from their mother's breasts, they imbibe a certain instinct to know food from poison, and *quod novum, hoc non verum*, which reduced to a simile of daily life, is simply this, that "no man, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better."

With a growing feeling, which at that time I considered Catholic, although it was, in fact, the very opposite, I allowed myself, on several occasions, to receive, while yet a Presbyterian clergyman, the Lord's Supper in the Episcopal Church, both because I would not turn my back upon a table that the Lord had spread, and also because the form of its administration in that Church commended itself so entirely to my understanding and my heart. A Presbyterian Communion, borrowing yet another unsightly feature from Congregationalism, is now generally celebrated in the afternoon, when the flesh is full, the mind weary, the eye heavy, and the heart asleep. But, as it is now no longer a Sacrament, it can be thrust out of its place in the freshness of the morning, to make room for the preacher and his sermon! To this dull, drowsy service, dictated by

a single mind, poorly qualified, at best, to raise me from the things of earth, and presenting to my longing lips a hard and chilling stone, for warm, nutritious bread, I came, in the accidental way just mentioned, to prefer a celebration, more commensurate with the dignity, and more congenial with the sweetness of so august a Sacrament. The Episcopal Church forbids its depending upon one man whether a whole congregation shall be edified or not, whether a glorious Sacrament shall be marred or not, whether the atonement shall ultimately be denied or not, and compels the minister to speak in "the words of sound doctrine,"—the words by which the martyrs passed away to their reward, and sainted millions in the ages gone by, grew so eminently ripe for Heaven.

The Communion office of the Episcopal Church is the resplendent gem in the girdle of devotions with which she belts the days of her holy year, and the hours of her holy days. In the immediate presence of Her Master, showing His hands and His feet, she rises above herself, in the magnitude of her conceptions, and the fervour of her strains.—No "thoughts" will suit her, but those that "breathe" in the bosoms of cherubim and seraphim; no "words" will answer her, but such as "burn" with the martyrs as they pass through the fires to God. Therefore, "with angels and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven," she pours forth the stirring strains of the *TERTIUS*, and the boundless chorus of *GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO*. Perhaps the Presbyterians who knows less of the Prayer-Book than does the Papist of the Bible, will be surprised to hear that these seraphic hymns, and other portions of our Eucharistic service, can be distinctly traced to the very days of the Apostles. Some hymns, some prayers the Apostles must have used; it is not likely that the early Church lost

them all; the first Fathers of the Church tell us that these were some of them; at the same time they have a sublimity and sweetness that no human pen or voice can resemble. What then is the inference, but that ours is the Church, instinctively preserved, of the Holy Apostles, and of their glorious companions? But the rapt spirit of the Communion service, the Presbyterian can never know; because to know it, he must enter into it, and taste and feel that it is his, as he falls down with an innumerable company, of every age, about the altar,—that great symbol of worship and of sacrifice.

When I had nearly resolved on entering the Church, I was conscious of a fear that I might become some day impatient, under the restraints imposed upon my "liberty," forgetting that one very intention of a Liturgy is, to prevent men's taking liberties in the presence and the worship of their God. And, although my experience since, causes me to be astonished at such fears, finding, as I do, that I am not straitened in the Liturgy—an ocean, so to speak, without a shore—but am only straitened in my own heart, and in the earth-bound ties that prevent my launching on its free and untrammelled bosom; yet in those days I went so far as to inquire of Episcopalians, and particularly of a clergyman, in whose candor I knew I might confide, whether they did not sometimes in their hearts covet a larger liberty. But Low Church differed not from High, nor the oldest from the youngest, in the universal answer, that the oftener they used their delightful forms, the more all other services appeared defective and unedifying. Such, I remember, was the testimony particularly of a venerable and excellent clergyman, now fallen asleep, with whose friendship I was highly favored, and whom the "denominations" around delighted to honor.

Besides these assurances, I came to find, that I had had already an experience on this point, to which I had not been sufficiently attentive. I began to notice that prayers which I had learned in infancy, especially the prayer "*Our Father*," came, morning and evening to my mind, so that it could never be forgotten nor omitted. Also the little verse, which my mother taught me—

"And now I lay me down to sleep,"

was observed to be the instinctive good-night with which I closed my eyes upon the world, and must continue so to be, until I shall have closed them on the world forever; and even in what is called extemporaneous prayer, I noticed, that my private devotions had all fallen into set stereotype expressions, and that only an extemporaneous *effort*, in its very nature injurious to devotion, would secure any tolerable variety in the pulpit itself.

There was, too, another thing that struck my attention with considerable force. In those revivals, which, according to modern Presbyterian ideas, are the true thermometer of all that is kindling or spiritual in religion, when all remnants of forms are avowedly delivered to the winds, and a species of spiritual carnival or anarchy prevails, the effect of *repetition* is found to be what Episcopalians assert, and the very reverse of what Presbyterians at other times suppose. Not only is there, in time of a revival, a recognition of one of the great principles of Episcopal worship, in the increased proportion of praise and prayer, but the praises and the prayers, like the cries of Him in the garden, are constantly "in the same words." In those critical moments, when the interest is most intense, you do not find the minister announcing a psalm or a hymn never heard before, nor a judicious chorister selecting even a new tune, for the purpose of varying the effect,

or of heightening the devotion ; but the hymn and the tune that were sung with such effect at the last meeting, must be sung again at this, and, though they have been repeated for weeks and months, yet no voice nor heart is weary. A new tune or hymn daily resorted to for *variety*, would *kill a revival in one week!* And, for years, and throughout life, those same enlivening tunes and kindling hymns are echoed in the social meeting, and re-echoed at the fire-side, and in the darkest and coldest seasons are invoked, to warm and cheer by their lively associations, the Presbyterian, in his less happy "frames." How hallowed, then, thought I, by sacred associations with the past, and with all past ages, and how delightful, by a repetition that enables us to appreciate the force of words, and how sweet as the very language in which our dear departed ones, day after day, poured out their hearts to God, and how adapted to recover a lost or deteriorated spirit of devotion, not to say, too, a lost or overshadowed faith, must be *such* a Liturgy as is found among the treasures of the Episcopal Church.

As a "revival," therefore by throwing the Presbyterian off his guard, and betraying the religious instincts of a pious mind, is a species of agitation, in which truth comes accidentally to the service, we appeal to it as an authority which certain minds can comprehend. And as a revival restores simplicity to the style of *preaching*, and is fatal to that metaphysical haranguing which degrades the pulpit to a level with the schools ; and as a revival rouses the worshippers from their cushioned seats, and brings them to their *knees* ; and as a revival suggests also the public reception to the Communion, after a mode corresponding evidently to the rite of *Confirmation* ; and as a revival elicits, moreover, the earnest *amen*, and the audible *response*, from

worshippers who feel that they have a right to join in, as well as hear the prayer, and, in fact, makes the privilege of prayer the privilege of all, so that even the women, who are commanded to keep silence, have their conventicles, where the full heart, denied its utterance in a Liturgy, may assert its liberty, and speak out its pent up emotions—so a revival does to Episcopacy a still further homage, by discovering the fact, that our most earnest and delightful devotions and “frames” are invariably identified with *set psalms, and hymns, and forms*, of which the ear, the lips and the heart grow weary never. Even the Princeton Review, cool, dignified, dispassionate as it is, acknowledges this principle in *sound*, even if it do not adopt it entirely in *sense*: “The lovers of old tunes will not be disappointed in finding such as Old Hundred, Wells, Saint Martin’s, Mear, &c.,—glorious old tunes, which our father’s sang, and handed down to us; time-honored, full of power, and deep religious influence, and which we are bound to use, and send down, unchanged and pure, to those that are to come after us.” To me it is a perfect riddle, that the man who would thus gravely reason for mere *sounds—vox et preterea nihil*—should not feel the strength of his own argument, when dealing with such a Liturgy as the Episcopal. For we wish no better words than his, to express the same thought with reference to the Liturgy: “The lovers of old [*hymns*] will not be disappointed in finding such as [*the rich BENEDICITE, the noble TE DEUM, the heavenly TERSANCTUS, and the thrilling GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO*] glorious old [*hymns*,] which our fathers sang, and handed down to us; time-honored, full of power and deep religious influence, and which we are bound to use, and send down, unchanged and pure, to those that are to come after us.” We cannot see how the Princeton Reviewer has

escaped the *a fortiori* in this matter. We are quite sure he must think well of Liturgies. The principle, whether it apply to devotion or to tune, cannot be disputed. Could Napoleon re-appear, to head his legions in the field, he would invoke the inspiration of the stirring *Marseillaise*; and could the martyrs and virgins and confessors return, nay, should the King Himself, in his beauty, come down, what strain more full of majesty and sweetness could we find for all earth's voices to go forth and greet Him, than the heavenly
TE DEUM?

The revivalist finds all his machinery ineffectual, until he has drilled the congregation into set phrases and a fixed routine of hymns and spiritual songs; and nothing so electrifies a Missionary meeting, or achieves so successfully the difficult task of sustaining a high wrought Missionary excitement on a great occasion, as the hymn of Bishop Heber—

"From Greenland's icy mountains."

Does the Presbyterian grow weary of the strain—

"Salvation, O, Salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till Earth's remotest nation
Shall learn Messiah's name."

Or does repetition lessen the thrill with which he sings

"Waft, waft, ye winds, the story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb, for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss return to reign!"

It was, then, a mistake to have supposed that I had made no experiment in the principle of Liturgical repetitions.—I found in myself, and observed in others, that the highest and happiest strains of devotion flowed always in the fixed

channels of precomposed hymns — written and familiar words. And the Presbyterian may rest assured, that what he has already found in the Missionary hymn, or in the revival chorus, such will he find in the anthems and prayers of a Liturgy kept bright by the use of ages.

The worship of the ancient temple was Liturgical, and was made so at the express command of God. The worship of the synagogue was Liturgical, and Jesus took part in the same. The greatest prophet that was born of woman, prepared a form for his disciples. Jesus himself gave a brief form to his followers, as John the Baptist had done before him. We find the apostles and brethren, when at prayer, "lifting up their voice to God with one accord."—St. Paul alludes to the familiar "amen" at Corinth, the "exhorting one another with the Psalms;" and tells us of irregularities and confusion created at first, by the popular participation in religious worship. To this, and much more in the New Testament, I could only oppose the instructions of Paul to Timothy, that prayers should be made "for kings, and for all that are in authority," "which does not look," says Dr. Miller, "as if the prayers of the Church at Ephesus, were cut and dried;" to which we *might* answer, that Timothy was now on his way to that Church to "cut and dry them," with instructions to include, among the subjects of prayer, "kings and all in authority," however vile or violent—a suggestion, we may add carefully, regarded in Liturgical worship, and too often unattended to in extemporaneous devotions. Even in heaven we hear the responsive worship—ten thousand times ten thousand voices, like the noise of many waters—the living creatures now upon their knees, and now standing before Him, the elders, the saints, and the angels, answering with voice and harp by turns, and proving, either that such, in St. John's

day, was the Church's worship upon earth, which he transferred in a figure, to the heavenly choirs; or that such is the gorgeous ceremonial of the heavenly sanctuary, which it is right and meet to imitate on earth. If the Princeton Review has found an argument for the adoption of instruments in the music of the Church, "*from repeated intimations of their use in celestial worship*," let the argument be pressed, until it shall unseal the lips of the worshippers, as they are unsealed in heaven. How strange to see in heaven the bright throngs all silently seated, and a single saint, standing and praying or praising for the rest! How strange to see a whole congregation upon earth all silently seated, and one man praying for the rest! We do not see why the preacher should not relieve the people of the singing, as he relieves them of their praying. As we demand therefore, of the Papist, to restore the cup to the laity, so we once more demand of the Presbyterian to restore the privilege of lay worship, which the preachers have usurped, and to give back to the people, with their ancient Baptism, their ancient responsive service.

Is priestcraft a stealthy assumption, increase, and monopoly of rights and privileges? Right stealthily has Calvinism withdrawn Baptism from the infant; right stealthily (for Knox and Calvin allowed a Liturgy at first) has it usurped the prayers, and devotions of the laity. Here are two privileges, that Rome, in her haughtiest moods, never ventured to deny her laity. But, will say the Presbyterian, our laity do participate in the worship; they have a whole volume of psalms and hymns, and are permitted to sing. Very well; a printed form of psalms and hymns is, so far a Liturgy, all full of prayers and praises, and is an argument for the use of forms. But let us hear once more the Princeton Review:—"It would seem as though the minis-

ter considered the interval of singing to be devised merely to give him an opportunity to attend to certain little matters of personal convenience. He starts the congregation upon a hymn, like an instrument wound up to go for a given time, and then proceeds to remove an extra wrapper from his neck, or to find the next hymn, or to arrange his notes and his collar, or, if it is the last tune, to undo his overshoes." Then follows the extraordinary intelligence,—
 "The singing is as much a part of the service of the house of God, as the prayer, or the sermon."

It is quite true, as writers on this subject have said, that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as Congregational extemporaneous prayers. A prayer may be extemporaneous to its composer, as it issues from a pastor's lips; but the instant his petitions and words are adopted by the people, it becomes to them a dictated prayer or form. The Rev. Mr. Barnes himself makes weekly prayers for a thousand people; the people have no choice, any more than have the Episcopalians whom he commiserates; they must use Mr. Barnes' prayers, or else use none. The only question, then, for his parishioners to settle, is whether they will adore and pray in the off-hand words that Mr. Barnes teacheth, or will worship in a Liturgy that has gathered to itself, in one glorious focus, the wisdom and the piety of all ages, or, as the dissenting divines already quoted have expressed it, which is, "next to the translation of the Bible into the English language, the greatest effort of the Reformation, holds the very first rank of uninspired compositions, and has no equal in any part of the universal Church of God."

I have not dwelt upon the Scriptural argument, because it is of the same nature with that by which we maintain the Baptism of infants, and the observance of the Lord's

day. It is the argument of allusion—rightly understood, the most unanswerable of all others. The temple and the synagogue services were those in which both the Master and the disciples worshipped, and we know that those services were rigidly Liturgical. But we do not need the argument from Scripture. The New Testament nowhere commands us to build Churches; but, throwing ourselves on the authority of the Old, which did, we find it to edification to build them still. So the New Testament may not command us to use Liturgies; but, falling back on the authority of the Old, which did, we find it unto edification to use them still. The New Testament could not prescribe a form for the Church, in all the varieties of place and condition under which the Church must exist; it could only settle a principle; and the example of both the master and the household established the great principal of Liturgical worship. Accordingly, we travel through the earth, and, wherever we find the Christian name, even among the Christians discovered by Buchanan, in the remotest East, and circled, since apostolic times, by the night of heathenism, we find the Liturgy; the Liturgy, be it remarked, always purer than the Church itself, and ever presenting the basis of a healthy reformation. We go back into antiquity, and find the fathers alluding continually to this feature of divine worship, and telling us of nearly fifty different Liturgies in use, in the different Churches throughout the world; in fact, they have left no record of a single Church in which public extemporaneous prayer was customary; they even tell us of Liturgies ascribed to the apostles; and fathers that lived within a hundred years of the apostles, speak familiarly of the Liturgy, for example, of St. James at Jerusalem, and others, of that of St. Mark, at Alexandria. And, throughout the world, there was, and there is, so strik-

ing a resemblance of phraseology, and especially of the leading points and their arrangement and relative position in these Liturgies, that they lead us necessarily to suppose some common origin of high and primitive authority. And it is to this authority, that we trace the loftiest strains of the present Episcopal Liturgy. Our "Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven," we find in all the Churches of antiquity, however widely separated, both east and west; and it had become known even in Africa to Tertullian, within seventy years of the apostles. So the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, we trace to the very infancy of Christianity, substantially as our Church hath used it in England, twelve hundred years. And, in like manner, the creeds in our Prayer-Book, we can find in the writings of an Irenæus, who was taught by Polycarp, the friend of St. John, and of a Tertullian, in more distant Africa, who, within seventy years of the apostles, informs us, that they had been "the rule of faith in the Church from the beginning of the Gospel." No marvel that the Liturgy commands the admiration of the world. Wesley for the Methodists, and Baxter for the Nonconformists, both adopted it in part. A hundred years ago, the Lutherans of Denmark adopted it, although in a mutilated form. In 1712, Prussia and Hanover came very near adopting it, together with the Episcopacy, in the lifetime of Archbishop Sharp. Perhaps, if Satan had not then hindered the labors of some learned and excellent men on the continent, that dreadful moral right which now blackens the face of Central Europe had not fallen upon Germany, whence its deadly shadows are reflected over the greater portion of the Protestant world.

Why should I say more? I went to the Jewish synagogue; the synagogue on which the great, unreal argu-

ment for Presbytery is built; and there I found the Jews, amidst their loss of country, home and temple, still perpetuating the Liturgical and responsive worship, as it rang of old through "the carved work of the sanctuary."

As to the objection, that it may become tiresome, the objection comes always from those who have not tried it. The users of Liturgies do not complain. It therefore falls to the ground. To hear the daily Liturgy, is to hear the voice of a friend that has supported us in sorrow, and has counselled us in danger, and has guided us in perplexity, and has raised us up from sickness, and has commended our dying into the hands of the Redeemer, and has, with pious hand, dealt tenderly with the dead, as it committed "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." To repeat it, is like repeating those endearing household words, of which the ear and the heart of true affection can never grow weary. We can no more grow weary of it, than we can grow weary of the air we breathe, or of the light we see, or of the bread we eat. The eye is diseased that grows weary of the light; the appetite is morbid that nauseates the sameness of its breath, its water, and its bread. And the heart is not right, and the spiritual taste is depraved, that would loathe this spiritual manna. Give back, thou man of Rome, the cup to a thirsting flock; give back, thou man of Geneva, the Liturgy to a congregation of dumb worshippers! Let not the cup of blessing be drunk by proxy; let not the great duty of worship by proxy be performed!

Again, What is the great business of the sanctuary? Worship. "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all people." How readeth the sectarian gloss? "My house shall be called the house of *preaching*." In former years I often went to my Church under feelings indescribable, of oppression and grief, that the pulpit—the pulpit—

was the great central object around which my congregation were assembling, and that, could I have asked them, one by one, "Friend, why comest thou in hither," probably without exception, the answer would have been, "To hear the sermon." O, I have longed a thousand times, to come down from the lofty pulpit, and lie low among my fellow-sinners at the throne of grace. But, the sermon—the sermon—the sermon; preach—preach—preach—was the everlasting cry. Even if our little ones could tell at night the text—the text—the text—it was enough. Is he a good preacher? Are his sermons eloquent—rousing—interesting—intellectual? Never was it asked on earth, in the selection of a pastor, are his prayers elevating? are they edifying? are they meet for the high purposes of worship? No! The preacher—the preacher—is the living-symbol, the *Grand Lama of Presbyterianism*, around which the people gather. In attempting, fruitlessly, in my humble sphere, to resist the overbearing tide, and to restore devotion and the Scriptures to their place in the worship of God, I encountered only the rebukes of my "most intelligent and pious" elders, not only for tempering my prayers with "the chaste fervour of the Episcopal Liturgy," but even for closing at least one prayer on Sunday, with the prayer which the Lord has commanded us to "say;" and this, although I conformed to the important order of Cromwell's High Parliament, in saying it at the end, rather than, as did the Church of England, at the beginning of my prayer. One of my elders happening to make this complaint to the late Dr. Milnor, the venerable divine replied, "Well, really, Mr. S., it seems to me, brother—has very good authority for using that prayer." But Mr. S. had come from a land that is said some years ago to have resembled heaven, chiefly in its color, and that in its palmier days, made it a

statutable offence to eat mince pies at Christmas—to salute one's wife upon the Sabbath—to pray at a Christian man's funeral—or to say the Lord's prayer in meeting.

I entered, now and then, an Episcopal Church; nothing shocked at the Low-Churchman's mitre, which there I might have seen—the symbol of her apostolic order; nor at the High-Churchman's cross, which I sometimes saw—the symbol of her evangelical faith. If I entered with my hat on my head, or the world on my lips, the altar, the glorious altar, looked me reprovingly in the face, and said, “The place where thou standest is holy ground.” The priest came in, in the white linen which the Lord commanded among a people whose salvation he had at heart, and kneeling low among his flock, joined with them, and they with him, in the great business of the sanctuary. He then went into the pulpit—not, as I had elsewhere seen, to gaze around complacently upon an audience—but, remembering that he was dust himself, to fall again, upon the ground beneath him, into the dust before God. A sermon, not elaborate nor ostentatious, but generally Scriptural and simple, ended with prayer; and the whole was followed by a reverential silence, and a pause for secret recollection and petition among the worshippers; contrasting much with the hurried exit I had seen from a Presbyterian meeting, where overshoes, hats, canes, gloves, shawls, bonnets, overcoats, were adjusted, and the worshippers, or rather, the “hearers,” were equipped for the street, before the benediction had been pronounced. What ideas Presbyterians may have of the benediction, it is needless to inquire; but the confusion in the congregation, while the minister is pronouncing it, savors somewhat of the *opus operantis* of a Popish priest, the benediction accomplishing its full mission, irrespectively of the faith or attention of the recipient.

It must be evident to my readers, that the whole atmosphere of sectarianism had now become to me uncongenial and unwholesome. To be losing my time and patience, and to be injuring my devotional taste and temper with the "gifts" of the brethren in a stupid prayer-meeting, when I might be wafted towards heaven in the sublime strains of a holy Liturgy; to be frequenting a more public service, where prayer was curtailed, and the holy Scripture almost excluded, and a few short verses of rhyme sung only as an interlude or rest, and all this done systematically, to make room for a labored sermon, often containing unawares, in flowers of reasoning and rhetoric, the seeds of neology and infidelity; to be advocating a Baptism that had lost its inward and spiritual part, and was limited severely in its application to a certain number; to be upholding a more awful Sacrament degenerated into an external and unessential rite, and administered in a mode, and received after a manner comporting well with the new ideas of its virtue; in short to be fruitlessly contending with continual hindrances to my devotion and salvation, in the uncongenial and unseemly things remarked in the foregoing chapters, and, as a minister to be perpetuating a system thus tried and found wanting; when, by a single step, I might, (by paying a price, it is true,) enter the larger liberty of a Church which breathes, and believes, and prays, and praises as she did when Irenæus, Ignatius and Polycarp beheld her glory, and the noble army of her martyrs died for her, as the pure spouse of Christ—all this had now become a burden too great for me to bear.

Yet, if a Presbyterianism, such as my fancy had many a time imagined, could at this moment have been presented to my mind; that should have made the Scriptures conspicuous, and worship the great business of the sanctuary; that should

have met the wants of a longing heart with a rich and noble, and wholesome Liturgy, all radiant with the gems of truth and holiness ; that should have placed the Sacraments under guard of an inviolable form, as being Christianity itself in epitome ; a Presbyterianism, in a word, with moderate attachment to old paths and landmarks ; my inquiries might here have ended, and I have continued in the traditions of my childhood. Again and again did the question recur, Why can we not have a Presbyterian Church! after the model that so many wish for ? And again and again, did the disheartening answer fall like lead upon my ears—"These gifts are not for you." They are incompatible with the genius and destiny of the Presbyterian system. Its destiny is, *always to lose—never to recover*. Its genius is, *never to believe, always to reason!* Certain ideas of religious "liberty," enough to make one tremble as he reads the predictions of St. Peter and St. Jude ; a new theory of religious "progress" and "development;" a certain vanity of "private judgment;" a preference of hebdomadal religion and spasmodic piety ; a singular opinion of spiritual "gifts;" and a more singular fancy, that every man praying to be led by the Spirit, is actually so led, in his interpretations for himself—not only prevail coextensively with the system, but are so essential to its very texture, that they must be forever fatal, not merely to all endeavours to revive Liturgical and Scriptural worship, but, as we shall presently see, to all movements toward the recovery of the primitive faith.

CHAPTER IX.

DOWNWARD TENDENCIES.

Having discovered the tendency of Presbyterianism to throw off, more and more, the decent garments, ritual and sacramental, in which the Reformation had so disguised it at first, as to secure for it, for a time, the respect, even of the Church of England, I had to pursue the facts in the case but a little further, to perceive that the system was quite incapable of long preserving, or of perpetuating unimpaired, the great principles of a Christian man's belief. There does appear to be a something ever preying on the vitals of the system, producing everywhere the same phenomena—the feverish irritation, succeeded by the long and languid ague—the high excitement, and its consequent collapse—the spasmodic life, and the succeeding torpor; or to drop this figure, it ever and anon gives birth to revivals and revolutions, to fresh schemes and schisms, to strange fancies and fanaticism, to new experiments, new sects, new theories, new doctrines; until the old landmarks which the fathers set up are swept away, the reign of intellectual anarchy sets in, and the developments go on to infidelity—at first, in its more insidious phases—and, afterwards, in its stouter and more hideous forms.

Departures from unity, I shall consider hereafter. I am to notice, now, departures from the faith. I shall be content to stand for the present, by those definitions of the faith, which the Wittemburg, Geneva, Westminster, Augs-

burg, Dort and Paris Presbyterians adopted at the Reformation. The proposition, then, is this:—That Presbyterianism is not conservative of things spiritual, more than it is careful for things ritual; and that, consequently, it could never have been intended to be the Lord's almoner of grace to men, or the steward of His mysteries to the household of faith.

In theory, Presbyterianism promises much for the Church's purity. The cords are drawn tight. The tests are severe. *The elect are numbered.* The tares are separated from the wheat, before the harvest. The good fishes are severed from the bad, while the net is yet in the deep. The door is shut against the foolish virgins, before the bridegroom has come: even infants, in vast numbers, are frowned away from the healing of its waters, and the porches of Christ's Bethesda are converted into the dungeons of man's Bethhoron, the house of mercy into the house of judgment. There is an unceasing *cutting off* of unsound members, and of unsound bodies, and a still more distressing *going off* of sect after sect, with the view of setting up a sounder faith and a purer worship.

With this rigor of discipline, was at first conjoined a severity of *creeds*, too well defined, one might have supposed, to be evaded; too solemnly subscribed, one might have thought, to be, by and by, denied; too evangelical, their abettors might have reasoned, to be ever undermined. Every avenue to error was foreseen and foreclosed. What then are we to think? We find no fault with the system on the score of consistency; "elect angels," "*elect infants*," "perseverance in grace," or the personal infallibility in doctrine, and indefectibility in grace, of each of the elect, and the "foreordination of all the non-elect to everlasting death,"—so repeatedly avowed in the Presby-

terian Confession—are a bold but manly and consistent carrying out of the great first error, the *πρωτον ψευδος*, lying behind the whole theory, that “God from all eternity, hath, for his own glory, by the mere good pleasure of his will, fore-ordained *whatsoever* comes to pass.” But it proves too much—more than the common sense of mankind, and the common sympathies of humanity, and the common and obvious first truths of Christianity, allow us for one moment to believe. Hence we set the system down, as the effort of a daring and gigantic spirit, seeking new ground, instead of falling back upon the old, whereon to raise a barrier against Popery. The terrific features of Calvinism, as they stand out from the canvass, under the fearless pencils of Zuinglius, and Peter Martyr, and Hopkins, and Emmons, that “God is alike the Creator of evil and of good, and is, by the same right, the author equally of sin and of holiness,” are but the legitimate offspring of the Genevan stock. The “Gethsemane plan of salvation,” recently advocated by divines in Philadelphia, computing the number of the elect with such commercial accuracy, that, if another soul had been intended to be saved, our adorable Lord would have been condemned to bear another pang, and to shed another drop of his most precious blood, is but another child of the same fruitful mother. So the *reductio ad absurdum*, or, to speak our mind freely, the reduction to inevitable blasphemy, is fatal to the pretensions of the system. If it be true, that “God, from all eternity, hath, for his own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass;” if it be true, that, for Adam’s sin, all mankind are *born*, “under God’s wrath and curse, and are made liable to most grievous torments, in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire, for ever,” as the larger catechism teaches, (Ques. 27, 28, 29,) then is it

reasonably true, as the same faith asserts, that certain *infants* are "elect," and it is truth to say,

"I, by my dire decree, did seal
His fixed, unalterable doom,
Consigned his unborn soul to hell,
And damn'd him from his mother's womb."

Presbyterians, if this be so, do right to ascertain, if they can, the deviding line, and to restrict their Baptism to such infants as they may suppose to be ceremonially elect and clean. But these results indicate that the whole theory is human, and, notwithstanding the recent evasive distinction of decrees, into decrees of *compulsion*, and decrees of *permission*, or of *peterition*—the decree of *Εὐδοκῆσις*, and that of *Εὐδίστησις*—the decree sublapsarian, and the decree supralapsarian—how unlike all this, is the cheering voice of the Apostles and the Church, recognizing, as God's elect, in a sense high and full of comfort and hope, the favoured communities and individuals to whom His kingdom had come down, who had received the good word of God, and had been enriched with the illumination of his Baptism, raised, in a word, under the Gospel, to a new and bright probation, in which salvation is made, not only possible to all, but, to all who will, is made gloriously certain; an election comparative, not absolute; an election to means and not to their result; to intermediate privileges and facilities, and not to abstract, and ultimate, and everlasting destinies; an election always to good, never to evil!

These results, so repugnant to every feeling of humanity; so incompatible with the boundless grace of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; so utterly at variance with the true sovereignty of an independent and infinitely happy Being; representing to a world, already disaffected, its Happy Father as producing, by His own inexorable and predetermined will, the blight and mourning that it suffers,

and yet, insultingly protesting, in His name, that He has "no pleasure in the sinner's death;" these results, we say, so entirely unlike the weeping God who stood on Olivet, all bathed in grief over the destinies of wayward guilt; so amazingly unlike Him in the garden and Him on the cross, and Him on high with the golden censor, and so unlike His Image, as faintly reflected in the sympathies of Humanity itself, produce after a while, a reaction in the mind; demonstrate *to the heart* the rottenness of the imposture; and, at this point, too often leave the bewildered man upon the sea of doubt and weariness, of scepticism and adventure.

In this, the Presbyterian and the Papist agree: the one defining Christ's gracious presence in the holy Eucharist, so as to violate our natural understanding; the other defining the divine sovereignty so as to shock our moral constitution: the one contradicting our senses; the other our sensibilities. And as, in throwing off Romanism, so in renouncing Presbyterianism, it is the natural tendency of the human mind to run, first, into religious anarchy, and, afterwards, by sure and measured strides, into downright infidelity. Hence the prevalence at this moment, of infidelity and blasphemy in France and Italy and Spain; and the infidelity, at the same moment, of Germany, and Denmark, and Geneva. Popery has done, in the one case, what Presbytery has done in the other. Side by side, is England on the West, and the Greek Communion on the East, and the Swedish religion on the North, under the influences of whose purer Episcopacy, and more or less pure traditions, infidelity expires. As the spell-bound Papist, awaking from his strange hallucination, and abjuring the worship of the Virgin and her companions in glory, is tempted by the same effort to throw off the worship of her Son, Who was once a companion of their sufferings—so the

Presbyterian, in casting to the winds the baseless fabric of a heartless system, rushes too often to the precipice, and takes the blind leap into a sea of irretrievable scepticism.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name," that He had planted on the shores a purer branch of His holy Church, with its sacramental signals waving high, inviting my sinking bark and failing heart into a quiet haven, at a moment when, in the liberty to which I knew not the proper check, I was tearing myself from a system uncongenial and unwholesome, and felt that the wide world was before me, and that all Churches, past, present, and to come, were equally at my election, and that none could say anathema, if, in the acknowledged right of private judgment I should myself originate a "Church," and call it after my own name, as others have so often done, that the blasphemy has now ceased to shock or even to surprise: or, if, in the large latitude conceded me, I should glide more modestly into the existing confederacy of Socinians, Arians, Pantheists, Neologists, Eclectics, Deists, Infidels or Atheists!

For myself, however, I did not, at first throw off the Presbyterian creed, because I had discovered its defects or crudities. True, both its crudities and cruelties have caused me many a bitter hour. Perhaps I continued to believe it, *because it was unnatural*, and might therefore be *divine*. But the change I have undergone, in respect of creed, has been rather by the silent and supplanting influences of a more Scriptural and wholesome, a more rational and consistent theology, of which I must say that I caught its spirit before I understood its terms. As nearly as I can now trace the change, the first hint of a higher and purer faith, I owe to the Westminster Confession,

which has erected a fabric, partly divine and partly human; an image, partly of gold, and partly of clay—*Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne*—and, in attempting to blend the old doctrine of the Sacraments with the new dogmas of a speculative era—earthly philosophy with celestial faith—has left a flaw, which reveals the weakness of the whole structure, and thus has fortunately suggested a starting-point, from which individual minds may *begin* to recover, as I was enabled to do myself, the ancient consistencies and beauties of a purer faith.

But that which, more than all other considerations, loosened the hold of my former creed upon my confidence, was the historical fact, that it had been found, after long and fair experiment, in every possible variety of circumstance, *insufficient, in any one instance, to protect and preserve inviolate the faith.* And if the things I am about to allege, be true, I do solemnly appeal to my former brethren, to weigh well the matter, and to abjure a system, which all history has shown to lack that vital force with which every seed in Nature has been endowed by its Creator; to propagate its like and to perpetuate itself.

To cite the condition of the Scottish Kirk, might seem hardly in point; as the eye of the Church of England is upon her; and the legislation of an Episcopal Parliament would not allow infidelity or heresy to supplant the faith of the old realm. But, notwithstanding these safeguards, how fares it with the Presbyterian Church in Scotland? Her disruption into eight or ten Communion, all strictly Presbyterian, and all owing their origin to alleged unsoundness in each other's discipline and faith, shall be considered, when we come to speak of schism; and we allude to it here, only as indicating a general restlessness under the Westminster Confession, and a constant tendency to

remodel its provisions. And what was the condition of the Kirk itself at the beginning of this century? Who will deny, that under the workings of an Arian, Arminian, and Pelagian leaven, in different proportions, what is now regarded as distinctively the Evangelical doctrine, was almost universally lost?

And what has been the fate of the Presbyterian Churches in England, where they have been sufficiently detached from the Scottish Kirk, to evade the legislation of an Episcopal Parliament? Of two hundred and sixty parishes established in their glory in the days of Cromwell, two hundred and forty are now Unitarian! I was personally informed, a few years since, in London, by men who bewailed the fact, that up to a recent date, every Presbyterian Church and Chapel in the metropolis had lapsed into Socinianism, and that, so instinctive seemed the tendency to this result, that the new and orthodox congregations had, for their safety, been compelled to adopt certain principles of allegiance to the Kirk of Scotland. On this account, I found myself advised and obliged, everywhere in England, to drop the name of Presbyterian, or if I still bore it, uniformly to explain it.

And what at the time we speak of, was the state of denomination in Ireland, the last of the Three Kingdoms? Where it was not Unitarian, it was Arian, from centre to circumference; and that within a hundred years of the most wonderful "awakening" or "revival," that history has recorded. In that revival, "multitudes swooned, and numbers were carried out as dead, and whole days together were spent in fasting, and preaching, and prayer.—I have known them," says an eye-witness, "to come several miles to Communion, and after the Saturday's sermon, to spend the whole Saturday night in company, in

conference and prayer. They have then waited on the public ordinances the whole Sabbath, and spent the Sabbath night in the same way, and yet, at the Monday's sermon, were not troubled with sleepiness, and so they slept not, till they went home." Not long after this, as has been commonly the case, under the operation of like causes, opposition to creeds began to be made, and Pelagianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, and especially the views of Dr. Priestly, prevailed, and were current at the beginning of this century. I have stated these facts thus particularly, because the Presbyterian Church in the north of Ireland is the immediate mother of the denomination in America. It was from her, and not from the Kirk of Scotland, that several ministers came over, into Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, organized themselves into the first American Presbytery. The mother has since played the harlot, and denied the Lord; the daughter—but we shall speak of her afterward.

Let us first cross the channel that divides England from the Continent. The glorious Church of the Huguenots and the Vaudois—a Church planted in the learning and, eloquence of Farel, and Viret, and Beza, and Du Moulin, and Calvin; dignified by the arms of its Condes and Colignys; fed by such pastors as Merlin, and Saurin, and Claude, and Daille, and Drelincourt; fostered by nursing mothers, in a Margaret and a Catharine of Navarre—a Church, that, for its influence, was dreaded by the Mazelines, and, for its virtues, was respected by the Fenelons of France—a Church that bared so often its intrepid bosom to the dragoons of the bloody Louis, and the musketry of the perfidious Charles, and that could spare, for a wedding banquet, in a single night, a hundred thousand victims from her fold, and the head of her noble Coligny, to grace,

at Rome, the festivities of an execrable jubilee—where is this Church, after which, for its virtues, and its prowess, the whole world wondered? It is fallen! It is fallen! At Passy, and at Paris, at Rouen, and at Charenton, at Nismes, and at Lyons, it is fallen, like a millstone in the sea. It is a cage of unclean birds; It is the hold of every foul spirit; it is the worst of anti-Christ's; it "*denieth the Father and the Son.*" The little flock of Moravians, no persecution has been able to diminish: the remnant on the mountains of Syria has survived the ravages of Islamism: but the Church of the Huguenots, only because it wanted the Apostolic descent, in which the Moravian and the Syrian are entrenched, has not only lost her numbers, but has lost her faith. Of her six hundred Presbyterian clergy, I was informed, a few years since, upon the spot, that "there was not found ten" who dared to affirm that Jesus Christ was "God manifested in the flesh." Who can wonder that infidelity has "hastened to the prey," and that Popery has "divided the spoil?" I am aware that, at this moment, there is a partial revival of orthodox opinions in that country; but I also know, that this revival, timid as it is, is not the spontaneous awakening of the Huguenot life, but is the effect of extraneous influences brought to bear upon that Church, not from Presbyterian Switzerland or Germany, but from Churchmen and Dissenters in Episcopal—Catholic England. Its character, too, is totally wanting in the manly features of the old Huguenot religion; it is pale, sickly, emaciated, and emasculated, presenting, at best, the melancholy spectacle of a distracted community, with here and there a solitary individual, sighing over its corruptions and its schisms.

Passing over to Switzerland, let us go through her twenty-two republics, beginning at the home, the Church,

the pulpit, the grave of Calvin. I saw in the heart of Geneva, a proud sepulchral monument to Rousseau ; but, to forgotten Calvin, " they raised not a stone, they carved not a line " The Confession of Faith continues, as it does in France, to be subscribed ; but it is no longer believed. The ashes of Servetus, to whose fiery death Calvin gave his voice, have been scattered over lake and hill, and have broken forth in blains and boils, upon the whole Presbyterian body ; while the opinions for which Servetus perished, are preached with trumpet-tongue, in the very cathedral from which Calvin hurled his anathemas against him. Of the whole venerable Synod of Geneva, but one solitary pastor, as I was informed when on the ground, was even *suspected* of believing in the divinity of Jesus. They began by denouncing it a superstition to bow at His name : they have ended by declaring it idolatry to bow to him at all. When, a few years ago, the venerable Malan dared to say, in his discourse, that Jesus " is the true God and eternal life," and that " there are Three that bear record in heaven," he was driven from his pulpit, and hooted on the streets, as profanely as if he had cast his pearls before a Musselman mob in Mecca or Beyrout. The same was the state of things in the other republics. In short, the old Church of Switzerland, the Church of Zuinglius and Bucer, of Farel and Beza, of Ecolampadius, and Calvin, has become openly Socinian and infidel. Any child in Geneva could have guided me to the bright islet, where the statue of Rousseau looks proudly on the blue Rhone, as it gushes out at his feet from the lake ; or to the house of Voltaire, which, from the French border, keeps sentinel over the city ; but I could find no one in Geneva capable of pointing out to me the spot in the churchyard where the ashes of Calvin repose. Even the handful of " Evangelical "

Christians in the place, I found, in 1833, divided, two against three, and three against two: the venerable Malan living in schism from his brethren, and Brownism, and Anabaptism creeping into the fold. Such has been the fate of Presbyterianism in the place where it was born, and drew its first breath. Protected in its birth by a frowning and gigantic creed, as the place where it was born was hemmed in by scowling and terrific mountains, still it has obeyed the law of its existence, has run through the circle of its destiny, and has ended in the denial of its Lord.

In my younger days, I had been greatly prejudiced against Episcopacy, by the fact, that public functionaries under British law were formerly required to be Church Communicants. The Church of England, though so "little among the thousands of Israel," is so truly "a city on a hill," that all that happens in her is immediately noticed and known, it would appear, over the whole earth. Yet the same abuse existed wherever Presbytery was established and existed within the memory of the living, in portions of New England itself. But I never heard of sacramental abuses so offensive as some that I have witnessed in Geneva. I happened, on one of the chief days of Communion, to be at the cathedral in which Calvin was the chief pastor in his lifetime. A large number of gentlemen and men stood in the streets about the Church, waiting until the sermon and preliminary services should end, that they might go in and receive the Sacrament. This, too, I was informed, was the common practice! With the views which I held, even then, that the unworthiness of the minister or of the congregation could not invalidate a Sacrament, and on the ground that the Creed yet remained as the Reformation had left it, and therefore that the Church was a Church of Christ, I remained in the cathedral, and

endeavouring to feel my own unworthiness, rather than that of the minister, I received the Communion without the smallest scruple. But here I may tell the world a secret. There was in our company that day, a Presbyterian clergyman, who thought, to use his own expression, that "the Church in Geneva had exceeded the limits within which a Church continues to be a Church of Christ," and with a conscience, I doubt not, as clear as my own, in the opposite direction, he would not and did not commune. It remains only to be said, that the clergyman, who thus turned his back on the altar at which Calvin ministered, and who dealt thus with the Church of Geneva as "an anti-Christ" in 1838, was the same who, in the controversy of 1845, made the following *ad captandum*.

"When Dr. Wainright, a gentleman, a scholar, a Christian minister, (in each of which titles there seems to be implied the idea of refined *feelings*, as well as bland *manners*;) has taken so public, so extraordinary an occasion, for the purpose of *un-Churching* the whole of Protestant Christendom, the Churches of Germany, SWITZERLAND, France, &c.; it is surely high time to demand that the public should be put in possession of the evidence by which so bold and unflinching an assertion is to be sustained; or, if that evidence is not forthcoming, it is equally high time that the enormity of the assumption should be exposed. There are hundreds who can perform the task better than myself, but still I believe it not a task which requires the strength of a giant."

Well said! Now then, Doctor, to your "task." If the veriest Lilliput is equal to it, I am sure that you are. You did not commune with the Church of Geneva, on the ground that it had "ceased to be a Church of Christ." I believe you *did* not, and *would* not, commune, and for the

same reason, with the large Churches of Germany and France. It surely is high time to demand that the *public* should be put in possession of the evidence by which so bold and offensive an edict of excommunication is to be sustained; or, if that evidence is not forthcoming, it is equally *high time that the enormity of the assumption should be exposed*. Doctor Wainwright, in 1845, did only what you had done before him, in 1838. *He did it*, on the ground of Catholic and established law; but *you* have done it on the ground of private and independent judgment. *He* did it, with a thousand leagues of sea between; *you* crossed the sea, and did it at the chief altars of Geneva. *He* charged them only with erecting another *Church*, which is *not another*; *you* have charged them with preaching "another Gospel which is *not another*." Whether of the two anathemas is most offensive? Pray, put "the public" in possession of "the evidence;" for, "if that evidence be not forthcoming, it is high time that the enormity of the offence should be exposed." But we will not wait.

Leaving Switzerland, let me ask the reader to go with me down the Rhine, and see how fare our "separated brethren," in Germany. It is well-known that the Protestants of Germany, like those of France, Holland, Switzerland, and, in fact, of the entire continent, with the single exception of Sweden, are Presbyterians. Many of them, from motives of expediency, or convenience—and it is a concession of great importance to Episcopacy—have created a class or order of Ministers, at first called Superintendents, but dignified, latterly, with the Babylonish name of Bishops; and, in this respect, resemble the Methodists of America, who have this spurious Episcopacy. But, in fact, the Protestants on the Continent, Sweden only excepted, are Presbyterian. And what has been the

fate of the faith in Germany—the land of Jerome, and Huss, and Grotius and Melancthon—THE LAND OF LUTHER? “I could not find,” says a recent American and Presbyterian traveller, “a single individual in Germany who believed in the eternity of future punishments.” Even the Evangelical and Excellent Neander, given up to what is known in Germany as the *theologia pectoris*, or religion of the affections, thinks that “the doctrine of universal restitution does not stand in contradiction to the doctrine of eternal punishment as it appears in the *Gospels*; for a secret decree of the divine compassion is not necessarily excluded, by virtue of which, through the wisdom of God, in the discipline of free agents, they may be led to a free appropriation of redemption.” The father of the new philosophy of Germany has been deified as “Messiah the Second;” and our awful Baptism, I was informed, had, by some of her clergy, been administered in the name of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or of Reason, Humanity, and Love of Country. It is taught by her pastors, that there is no other God than in the things we see, and that man himself is the highest impersonation of Divinity, and, in such a one as Christ, man may therefore be lawfully adored! As to the Bible, it has been justly said, that “if Luther could return from the dead, he would find the Bible as much banished from the communities professing his doctrine, as it was, in the worst times of the Papal policy.” And if the Bible has begun to reappear in those lands at all, it has been in many an instance, if not in absolutely all, by the direct or indirect agency of *British* residents, or of a *British* and Foreign Society.

Nor would this be so terrific a result of Presbytery, if the “Evangelical” clergy of Germany, of whom one here and there is to be found, gave hope of a brighter day.

But Luther himself bequeathed to them the dangerous precedent of setting Scripture itself aside, when it stood in the way of some favorite opinion. *Epistolem Stramineam*—An Epistle of Straw—he did not hesitate to style the Epistle of St. James, because it laid the axe effectively at the root of his *articulum ecclesie stantis vel cadentis*. Other books of the Bible fared with him but little better. The German Evangelical Clergy, still profiting by the courage of the master, are able, by a dash of the pen to settle, on the basis of “private judgment,” the canon of Scripture which the whole Catholic Church was cautiously substantiating for three hundred years. “Scarcely a book of the New Testament,” says a Presbyterian writer well acquainted with his subject, “has escaped the *obeliscus* of some Aristarchus; and we know not that the Doctor’s hat could be duly conferred, in Germany, on one who had not singled out some book for elimination. . . . There are in Germany scores of scholars whose tact enables them to pick out a Pauline epistle as confidently as a bank-cashier can detect a counterfeit note. . . . Several attribute the Apocalypse to a disciple of John. Eichhorn pronounces it a drama on the fall of Judaism and Paganism. . . . Semler condemns it as a work of a fanatic. Ammon thinks the author and the editor of John’s Gospel to be different persons. Vogel, Rettig, Ballenstedt, and Bretschneider, deny its authenticity. Schliermacher rejects First Timothy: Eichhorn rejects all the Pastoral Epistles. Schmidt throws doubt over both the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Cludius treats those of Peter in the same way. Baur and Schneckenburger consider Luke, in the Acts, not as giving a faithful narrative of events, but an apologetic statement, to vindicate favorite opinions. Kern maintains that the Epistle of James was forged by

a Jewish Christian, in the name of this Apostle, to controvert the Pauline doctrinal views which prevailed in the Gentile Churches. Gfrorer finds undeniable marks of falsehood in the account given of Cornelius. And it is significant, that even *the sounder German writers*, when called upon to combat such views, rehearse them without any approach to a shudder. . . . Neander himself regards the Epistle to the Hebrews as the work of a Christian, a learned and eloquent Alexandrian, who stood to Paul in the same relation as Melancthon to Luther. He denies the genuineness of the First Epistle to Timothy, and exceedingly doubts that of Jude, and entirely gives up the Second of Peter. As to the inspiration of the Scriptures generally, Neander holds it, both in degree and in kind, far below what is regarded as orthodox among ourselves."—Such are the fancies of German divines and universities, to which the Stuarts, and Hodges, and Alexanders of Presbyterianism, and her seminaries in America, are sent to learn the Art of Exegesis. And these are the elaborated fancies of Neander, "A venerable theologian," according to the Princeton Review, from which I have just quoted, and am now quoting again,—"*A venerable theologian, and a noble scholar—perhaps the most celebrated Professor in Germany, and whose works we never open without instruction and delight.*"[!] And such is the sea of doubt and wild conjecture, in which even the "Evangelical" remnant in Germany are driven. And, unless the Church be invoked as the true Witness, to say, what *were* the books of Scripture confided to her, *from the beginning*, who shall settle, either for the German Presbyterian or American, the canon of Scripture, and give them again *the Bible*, of which Presbyterians in this country yet unthinkingly boast, as the rule of faith, but whose claims they are consistently enough

beginning, like their more advanced brethren in Germany, to re-investigate, in all the unbounded plenitude, and the *jure divino* of untrammelled "private judgment."

Thus has Socinianism, with her pestilential train, trodden, with giant step, the causeways of Irish Presbyterianism; planted her banners in the Presbyterian encampments along the Thames and the Seine; written her insulting creed on the tombs of the Vaudois and the Huguenots; reared her towering head above the Alps and the Apennines; dashed on, like the winter avalanche, into the fair vallies of Switzerland; and kept her insulting jubilee in the cathedral of Geneva, and over the dust of Calvin.—Rolling with the turbid torrents of the Rhine, she has scattered its seeds of death into a congenial soil upon its right bank and its left; she has entered the seats of learning, and, by her resistless spell, has won over to herself the renowned universities of Germany. Leyden and Leipsic have fallen down before her. Wittemburg and Heidelberg have kissed her feet: and Göttingen and Berlin have anointed them with ointment. In a word, the lawful child of Presbytery has succeeded to the Empire, *wherever* Presbyterianism had reigned before her. She would fain have crossed the stormy Baltic, and have planted her icy tabernacle in the north, and, like the maelstrom on the coast of Norway, have swallowed, in her capacious throat, the Churches of those empires. It was not the stormy wave of the Baltic that arrested her progress; for she had stridden a continent and an ocean before. It was not the hills of Dofresfield that turned her back, for she had conquered the Jura and the Alps. But, with the music of those waves, there were borne to her ears the strains of a Catholic *Liturgy*, and beautiful upon those mountains she beheld the feet of Apostolic Bishops. "It would be interesting," says a writer.

on whose accuracy I must, for the present, rely, "to compare the two kingdoms of Saxony and Sweden. Both are almost exclusively Lutheran; the people of both are generally well educated; religion is one of the studies in every grade of the public schools of both. One is universally Rationalistic; the other universally Orthodox. One has not more than half a dozen Evangelical preachers, out of six hundred clergy; the other has not as many Rationalists, out of three times that number! One is Episcopal and has retained the Apostolic succession; the other is Presbyterian, and without it."

I know of but one other spot in Europe, out of which this spirit has departed "naked, and wounded and bleeding." The Church of England has, by the daily incense of her wholesome Liturgy, enbalméd an atmosphere around her, which Socinianism has never with any comfort, been able to breathe, and, by her Apostolic descent, has inherited a blessing, which Socinianism, with her mess of red pottage, has never been able to supplant. Socinianism, like a local malaria, with her train of diseases, has been invited from Geneva, into the ruins of a few Presbyterian and Baptist Congregations in England, but to them has been rigidly confined; not a congregation of the Church of England, throughout an empire on which the sun never sets, has ever caught the infection. Mr. Lefevre, of New-York, on his return from a visit to England, complains that "the system of American Universalism has not a single defender in England." In a single word, the fact—enough to make one shudder at its contemplation—must now be obvious, that, if Presbyterianism had retained its footing in Great Britain, the whole Protestant world would at this moment have been Socinian or Infidel! During four years that it triumphed under Cromwell, one

hundred and seventy-six sects, or forms of heresy and blasphemy appeared; and, as stated before, of two hundred and sixty Presbyterian Congregations that survived the Restoration, two hundred and forty have lapsed into Socinianism. Well may the Church of England be called "THE BULWARK OF THE REFORMATION:" and we marvel not that all that *touches* her—since it touches the apple of the world's eye—is at once felt at the Earth's heart, and in all Earth's extremities; and the least speck upon her face, like a spot on the great luminary in heaven, instantly attracts the observation of the world. Still there is the owl and the bat that would rejoice in her eclipse! These are the facts that drove me rapidly on toward the result contemplated in this narrative.

But give Presbyterianism the opportunity of one more experiment. Follow the "May-Flower" in her ocean-path, and wonder to yourself, whether the flood from the dragon's mouth shall pursue this woman and her child into the wilderness.* Behold the Pilgrims disembark: a noble race, a virtuous people, a godly congregation, who fast, and give alms, and pray, and establish once more, not unaided by sons of the Church of England, a Christian empire, far from the contact and contamination of the old leaven, and fortified in fence-work deeper, higher, broader, than any that had been contrived before. And are we to see this new empire of faith uprooted? Is the same death-worm to gnaw at the root of the transplanted tree? Are we to behold the same mysterious plague-spot appear in a new clime, upon a healthy and vigorous frame, until from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, it shall be "a leper white as snow?"

And tell us ye divines and ye diviners, when shall all this be? Shall it be soon? Shall not generation after

generation, washed in the Lamb's blood, be placed first beyond the reach of sin and death? No! we tell you, *no!* Scarcely have the feet of the Pilgrims touched Plymouth Rock, before the empoisoned waters gush from its bosom. Scarcely have the children that gambolled on the decks of the May-Flower, grown up to manhood, ere Arminianism, at once the offspring and the antagonist of Calvinism—an Arminianism not grounded in Catholic truth, nor guarded by Catholic restraint, but guarded and grounded in the vain sanctions of human reasoning, and the simple reactions of human instinct,—has overspread the land, and an Egyptian darkness has stretched its curtain over the new empire.

Time rolls on. Reformers again rise, and again bare their breasts to persecution. Whitefield, with his Episcopal orders, and a heart moulded in a Liturgical faith—a man of fasts and vigils, who, at Oxford, spent whole nights on the cold earth in prostration and prayer, but a man whom the Church of England preferred to drive from her communion, with the Wesleys and their companions, into schism, because she wanted the wisdom to employ them in her own bosom—Whitefield, and a few individuals like-minded, come, as another Moses and Aaron, to spread their hands over the land, and dispel the unnatural darkness, and once more we see New England, through Whitefield of the Church of England, recovering, to some extent, the faith and its practices, which, in the short space of a hundred years, it had unaccountably lost.

But again, men who sat entranced under the burning eloquence of Whitefield, what have they seen at the beginning of the present century? The Church of the Puritans, after as fair an experiment as it was possible to make—with the whole ground again to itself—eaten up, to its very heart, with Socinianism; and a Socinianism

not imported, like the plague, by any intercourse with degenerate Geneva, or Halle, or Berlin, or Belfast, or Montauban, but springing up by the natural law of generation, in the moral world, from the latent germ, that, in a free-thinking theory, is at once the *primordium vitæ* and the *primordium mortis* to the system. The Blighting angel drops again the cursed dew from his wing, over bright New England, and the pulpits of her capitals, and of her quiet villages; the pulpits of her Mathers, her Davenports, her Hookers, her Robinsons, her Rutherfords, are occupied by preachers who, confronted by no Liturgy of purer times, preach fearlessly and blasphemously that Jesus is *not* "the true God," and that the Son and the Father are *not* "One." "I am verily afraid," said Increase Mather, in the heyday of Puritanism, "that, in process of time, New England will be the wofullest place in all America." "Yea, we are fain to that madness and folly," said Edwards, "that I am persuaded, if the Devil came visibly among many, and held out independency and liberty of conscience, and should preach that there were no devils, *no hell*, no sin at all, but these were only men's imaginations, with several other doctrines, he would be cried up, followed, admired." And the result has made good these singular predictions.

The Universalists alone, teaching that "there is no hell," boasts of having come into possession of a thousand pulpits, among the sons of the Puritans, in this ill-fated land! In 1840, they had but eighty-three preachers; now they have seven hundred preachers, and eleven hundred congregations; and claim, in point of numbers, to be the fourth denomination in the country. Nearly all New England was Socinian. Every old congregation in Boston, except the "Old South," was Unitarian. The

Church that looked down so long in pride on Plymouth Rock itself, has yielded to the destroying heresy. I have even heard that Emmons and Hopkins, the Calvinistic leaders, of a later day, could they come back, would find their Churches and flocks engulfed in the one *gurgite vasto*. No wonder that we hear, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that, in America, the lineal descendant of Mather the Puritan has returned to the Episcopal Church; that in Germany the descendants of Luther the Reformer have taken refuge in the Romish Communion; and that, in Great Britain, a descendant of Cromwell, the Protector, ministers at the altars of the Church of England.

As to New England, we regard the last experiment of Calvinism as made. "Ten years," says a sagacious Presbyterian divine, "will place the [*orthodox*] Churches of Massachusetts beyond redemption." Says the Editor of "The Presbyterian," "The ground they assume in the contest with the Socinian is absurd and futile. The latter may lie on his arms, without striking a blow, and confidently await the issue." "It has been long prepared in itself," says a discerning Unitarian, "for a reform in its theology; but its allegiance to the public sentiment of more sluggish communities has retarded it. It is laboring along, like an active steam-tug with a half-dozen logy ships in tow. Andover, for example, could she have been freed from her deference to Princeton, would long ago have fallen into the arms of an essentially liberal Christianity." This is the tendency—downward and downward—still everywhere downward. There is no remedy—and so the people begin to understand—but in the time-worn Church, to which a goodly multitude are coming back, with the cry, as one has uttered it, "O my Ancient Mother, take back a weary and heavy-laden wanderer to

thy bosom ; give me thy yoke and thy burden, that I may find rest to my soul." "If the Episcopal Church had been known in New England," said one of her wisest and most celebrated statesmen, to a Churchman, "we should never had been Unitarians ; we are Unitarians only in the ignorance and the absence of something better." And the late growth of the Church there appears to justify the remark. In Connecticut, where the chanting of the service when first introduced by Bishop Seabury, was laughed at and hooted by the people on the street as an "Indian pow-wow," there are now one hundred congregations that so worship God. And of Newburyport where the bones of Whitefield are entombed, it has been said of this man and that man in the list of the Episcopal clergy, that he was born there. That single town, as if Whitefield had repented in the dust, and had warned them from the dead to return to the bosom of their ancient mother, has given birth to at least twenty living pastors and divines of the Episcopal Church.* Yet so it must be ; for thus it is written, "the sons also of them that afflicted these shall come bending unto thee."

* Their names are as follows :—

- The Rev. Wm. Bartlett, St. Luke's Chelsea.
 " " Josiah M. Bartlett, Pierpont Manor, W. N. Y.
 " " Moses B. Chase, Chaplain U. S. Navy.
 " " Thomas M. Clark, Trinity Church, Boston.
 " " George H. Clark, late of All Saints' Church, Worcester.
 " " Samuel A. Clark, Church of the Advent, Philadelphia.
 " " Samuel Cutler, St. Andrew's Hanover, and Trinity, Marshfield.
 " " Benjamin Dorr, D. D., Christ Church, Philadelphia.
 " " Samuel M. Emery, Trinity Church, Portland Conn.
 " " William Friend, St. Peter's and Grace Churches, Port Royal, Virginia
 " " Benjamin Hale, D. D., President Geneva College, N. Y.
 " " William Horton, St. Thomas's, Dover, N. H.
 " " Jacob B. Moss, St. Thomas Parish, Baltimore Co., Maryland.
 " " Moses P. Stickney, St. Peter's Church, Cambridgeport.

When I first became acquainted with the facts narrated in this chapter and in the one preceding, I was more startled than if seven thunders had uttered their voices, and as much convinced as if seven angels had poured their plagues before my eyes on the seat of Presbyterianism. I conjure the Presbyterian to account for these *frightful* phenomena, by any explanation that shall not make it his first duty to abjure the system he has espoused. There is a *semper*—there is a *ubique*—there is an *ab omnibus* about it, that fills me with amazement. Why is it, I inquired that, in different languages, and in distant lands; sundered from each other by oceans and untrodden hills; separated even by mutual jealousies and hates; antipodes to one another in education, and taste, and habits of life and modes of thought; and with mutual antipathies, in some instances wrought up to the highest pitch by protracted and barbarous wars—why is it, that the religion, that has once divorced itself from its Bishops and its Liturgy, is downward and ever downward in its tendency, bequeathing her sceptre in all lands, without a single exception yet, first to the Socinian, and then to the infidel? Particularly I asked myself, and now I ask the candid Presbyterian, to tell me, how it is, that the system established by these pious men; men of fasting and alms and prayer, of learning and untiring zeal, of intellectual power and virtues sufficient to have given them a control beyond their times; men “of whom the world was not worthy”—has suffered in so short a time this awful retrogression? Why is it, that a Church, which

- The Rev. Charles C. Taylor, St. Andrew's, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
 “ “ Stephen H. Tyng, D. D., St. George's Church N. Y.
 “ “ James H. Tyng, Jr., St. George's Church, N. Y.
 “ “ Frederick Wadleigh, St. James's Church, Arlington, Vt.
 “ “ George D. Wilde, Grace Church, New Bedford.
 “ “ John Woart, Christ Church, Boston.
 “ “ Charles C. Adams, St. Paul's Church, Key West, Florida.

they would joyfully have defended with their lives, and which they guarded by an uncompromising creed and by a vigorous discipline—a Church, that, less than a hundred years ago, amid a universal re-awakening, returned for a while to the manly faith of the earlier Puritans—should now, *again*, while hearts are yet beating that kindled and beat under the eloquence of Whitefield and Brainerd and Edwards and the Tennants, have lapsed into Socinianism—Universalism—Deism? One of their favorite divines we find, in a New-York pulpit, associating, in a breath the names of “Socrates and Cato, of Howard and Lafayette, of Jefferson and Jesus!” “Such is the era,” says one of their orators in the mesmeric trance—and not unendorsed by a number of their clergy—“such is the era foreseen by David, Isaiah, Zechariah and Daniel, and impressed upon Confucius, Zoroaster, Brahma, Jesus, Mohammed, Fourier—it was sung on the Orphic lyres of Egypt—preached and anticipated by Paul—and described by John in the Apocalypse!” We hear Boston divines beginning at last to deny the personal existence of their Maker; and the learning of old Harvard University is at this moment employed in the grave business of seeking to convince her sons, that, although they be right in denying the “*three* that bear record in heaven,” yet their is sufficient reason to believe that there is One! Herself the plaything of a hundred schisms and sins, the old New England Church is now abandoning her children to “the delirious wanderings of the transcendental philosophy; and some of her leading divines are echoing the huge atrocity of Germany, that Jesus was but one of a series of Messiahs, whom the world has a right to look for, until society shall be conducted by the paths of liberty and progress to its longed for perfection.

Once more. That small portion of the Presbyterian

Church, to which it has been my happiness to be attached—what, said I, cautiously, within myself, is its condition? Is it always on the downward road to doubt and dissolution? Let me think. Under my own eyes, and while enjoying, as some have said, “the most remarkable revival since the days of the Apostles,” it has been rent into irreconcilable parties, which have ended in the adoption of opposing creeds, and separate communions; the same philosophizing spirit is stalking in its midst, which has, all around it, entirely supplanted the old faith. On the principle, “*Nec Deus intersit, si Deo non dignus nodus*,” we are told that natural causes may have dried up the Red Sea; that natural causes may have rained fire on the plain; that natural causes may have hung a meteor in the heavens over bethlehem; that natural causes may have produced all the phenomena ascribed by our Lord to demoniacal agencies, in accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews. Not very far, all this, thought I, from the German discoveries, that the Ascension of Jesus was his disappearing in a mountain-fog, and his stilling the tempest was his settling a dispute among the sailors.

And, in doctrinal theology, almost afraid that my very thoughts should be overheard, I yet thought within myself, Where do we stand? “Original sin is an original absurdity”—“Imputed righteousness is imputed nonsense,”—“Natural inability makes sin a natural misfortune, but certainly not sin”—“We must be willing to be damned, that God may be glorified, or we cannot be saved”—“We are as much indebted to God for sin as for holiness”—“God is as much the Author of evil as of good”—“God was bound to introduce sin, as producing, through grace, the greatest possible amount of knowledge and of happiness”—“Regeneration is simply a resolution of the will, in view of

motive, or is the result of moral suasion"—"Were I as eloquent as the Holy Ghost, I could by the presentation of motives, regenerate the world"—"When the laws of mind shall be better understood, regeneration will universally take place, as the natural result of the proper selection and adaptation of motives"—"As God cannot govern the sun by motives, nor the stars by the ten commandments, so neither can He regenerate mind, and give it a new direction, by the direct and immediate power of His grace"—"Spiritual Christianity is to be henceforth the standard; perish forms and creeds"—"The Church must be re-built upon broader *basis* of faith"—"Its discipline must be altered, and other tests of communion, adapted to the times and the societies around us to be instituted"—"The eternal generation of the Son it is not absolutely necessary to believe"—"In fact, we subscribe the Confession of Faith only as indicating the outline or substance of doctrine"—"And the old juggling doctrine of the Atonement, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, must be abandoned for that of an Atonement, by which man shall become morally at-one with God"—"for, (to use the language of one of our eminent divines, whose pen seems not to have understood the first lesson of reverence,) no debt was due from us to God, and consequently, *none was paid by Christ*; we had not deprived God of His property; we had not robbed the treasury of Heaven; God was possessed of as much riches after the fall, as before; the universe and the fullness thereof still remained His; we neither owed money to the Deity, nor did Christ pay any on our behalf; *His atonement, therefore, is not a payment of our debt.*"

These, and numberless like propositions, continued I to myself, emanating from the Edwardses, the Beechers, the Barneses, the Skinners, the Emmonses, the Hopkinses of

Presbytery, have, within my own brief recollection, become the absorbing themes of our pulpits, our schools of theology, and, in the absence of a Liturgy, of our very prayers. The Old School, or Orthodox Presbyterians, occupying themselves, for the most part, the doubtful and slippery ground of the New Lights of the last generation, are awhile in doubt whether they can rally in sufficient strength to "excise" their unsound brethren, or whether they shall be driven to secession, as the only escape from evils under which the body is groaning. The crisis comes. The Church is rent. Heresies multiply. The Catechism, in a thousand parishes, gives place to "Union questions," and to "The Child's Book on the Atonement," "The Child's Book on the Soul and its Immortality," and perchance, "The Child's Book on the existence of its God!" The Catechism once neglected, there is no possible way of commending such a system to a ripened understanding, in after life; and the whole body, loosened in its joints and bands, is preparing for its dissolution. Even that portion of the Presbyterian body, which, by setting adrift sixty thousand communicants, aimed at becoming purer, is still entirely below the requirements of its Confession. The Sacraments, in the sense of that Confession, are almost lost; the eternal generation of the Son not held to be at all essential; the distinction between moral and natural inability, ultimately so fatal to the system, allowed; salvability of all, in a certain sense, assented to, at the necessary expense of election and a limited redemption; and Princeton itself, becoming daily more remarkable for the patience, respect, and "delight," with which the student and the reader are conducted through its Reviews and its Exegetical Chairs, to the laboratories of the German theologians. In fact, the Old School Presbyterians, while boding that

"ten years will place the Churches in Massachusetts beyond redemption," are unconsciously far out on the ebbing tide, toward the gulf of Continental Neology.

There is certainly a chain of hands from Calvinism down to Atheism—Calvin reaching the hand to Luther, Luther to Arminius, Arminius to Pelagius, Pelagius to Arius, Arius to Socinus, Socinus to Messiah the Second, and even Messiah the Second to another, and another still, whom this theology teaches us to look for. At Calvin, the uppermost link of the theological chain, retaining yet much of its ancient Catholic consistency and polish, the series stops; and between Calvin and Cranmer, Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, human philosophy and celestial faith, private judgment and Catholic consent, there is an interval, wide as the earth, high as the stars, and lasting as the heaven. Why then should Episcopalians be blamed for not wishing to bridge the gulf, or to break down the dividing wall? Or why should they be derided for seeking to restore that wall, where it may have been weakened? Is there not a hid treasure in its corner-stone? Pray, gentlemen, desist from calling names. Pray, for a trifling temporary advantage, do not endeavour to stultify us to the world, and expose us to its sneer, by creating the impression, that it is for forms and shadows that Episcopalians contend! We will not tell you you know better; but we do tell you *it is high time that you knew better*. The advantage this mode of warfare gives you, will not last you long. We bide our time. When Presbyterianism, where it is new, shall have run the course and reached the decay that it has run and reached wherever it is old, the world will see—alas, too late for many!—that it has not been a war for forms. It is not an archangel contending with Satan for the body of Moses. It is the Bride, the Lamb's

Wife, contending with anti-Christ for the divine perfections of her Lord. Has *she* ever—has she *ever*—since the moment of the Reformation, sympathized with the heresi es on very side of her, which not only deny that the Lord hath “bought us with his blood,” but deny that He who bought us is the Lord? Wherever Apostolical Episcopacy exists—and it now belts the earth—Jesus is worshipped as “very God of very God;” His blood, in all places, the price of our redemption; His cross, save where your own hands have torn it down, the symbol of our hope; and the Creeds of the earliest times, recited with a lowly bowing at the name of JESUS. How different, where Presbytery has fulfilled its course—in London or in Belfast, in Paris or Geneva, in Berlin or in Boston—it matters not where—*wherever* it has run its course, there Jesus is rejected, and his crown trodden in the dust. It is the “invariable antecedent and consequence” of the philosopher—the plain “cause and effect” of common sense—the *semper post hoc, ergo, propter hoc*, of all human experience.

After attentively considering the terrible experiment of three hundred years, I sought in vain, to fly from the conclusion, that Presbyterianism embodies in it, by an inherent and innate necessity, the elements of its own decay. Certainly its undying worm is nurtured in the heart of its unhealthy bud. The *punctum saliens*—the principle of the system, is fatal to the system: the very condition of its existence fatal to that existence: the freethinking on which it is based, its own death-warrant. Its leading, hinging, fundamental article, “the right of private judgment,” is a cup of sorceries. But it is a golden cup, and “the wine therein giveth its color, and it moveth itself aright,” When once “the right” to taste has been

established, impossible it is to fling the intoxicating bowl away. Deeper and deeper must the victim drink, until, in a wild delirium, he will suck out its very dregs. The "right of private judgment" is the very key, by which the intellectual sophistries of Calvinism are reached and detected, and, unless the conservative principle of Catholic consent intervene in time to give my mind a new and safe direction, I am lost. Yes, I have been myself upon the slippery descent. What held me back? Calvinism as history has shown, and as the operations of my own mind would lead me to suspect, is the first step of a liberal intellect towards honest infidelity. Presbyterianism, with empires in her arms, has been commonly two hundred years, in running its course. But the individual mind, borrowing her impetus, can easily outrun her. A philosophical mind, like Doctor Priestly's, or a mind formed like Mr. Belsham's, in a physical and utilitarian mould, or an active, imaginative mind, like Milton's, may, in a single lifetime, run through this circle of opinions. Milton, to take but one of those examples, whose fingers swept with such inimitable grace and grandeur the strings of a seraphic lyre, alas! with a like facility, almost poetic, swept over all these notes in the descending scale of theology. Leaving the Church of Rome, and from political animosities, unwilling to stop at the Church of England, he became a Presbyterian—then, an Independent—next, Anabaptist—afterward, an Arian—and eventually a Socinian—although it is believed that later in life he returned to a better mind. So the freethinking mind of Watts, the great poet, whose words of praise form chiefly the present liturgy of Presbyterians, labored, it is understood, anxiously and painfully on the question of our Lord's divinity, while the chair that he occupied as a preceptor has in latter years, we are informed, been filled by a Socinian.

Yes, I have stood myself upon the topmost round of this slippery descent, and have seen the depth as it darkened below me. And from my soul I bless the hand of Providence for interposing the faith of the earliest and purest ages as an alternative to my distracted breast. I ascertained that there was a clearer and steadier light than the sparks of reason's kindling, in which Christianity might be considered—not the light of a volcano, bursting in Germany, and leaving the earth strewn with ashes and cinders—not the light of a meteor, flashing on Geneva, and leaving the heavens darker than in the nights of Popery—not the light of a planet, reflecting for a while the bright rays of the body from which it is broken, and then sinking into silence and eclipse—but the steady, unfluctuating light of a primitive age, all radiant with innumerable constellations, that, like the light of the natural firmament, has come down to us undimmed and unimpaired. O it is refreshing beyond all utterance, after following these human guides and wandering stars—the Luthers, and the Calvins, and the Wesleys, of yesterday—to see at last a Christianity shining with that same full-orbed light in which Polycarp and Ignatius and Irenæus beheld its glory, and to know as a historical fact, that it is as much the same, as the light of the celestial bodies above us is the light that shone upon their natural eyes.

I may therefore repeat, that to my mind the inference was irresistible and, may I not say, philosophical, that for the uniform defection of Presbyterian communities from the faith, or their continual tendency to that defection, there must be a uniform cause; and that this cause must be inherent in the system; for the frightful phenomena are everywhere the same; in empires and nations and in narrower localities, separated by sea and mountain, and diverse from each other in language, government, education, taste,

and all the habits of mind and modes of thought. And I thought I could perceive that, next to the self-sufficiency of private judgment, and next to the principles on which they depend, of exegesis and of argument, by which every thing must be clearly defined and proven, the chief secret of this terrible decay is in the want of a liturgy to protect the faith, and of the order of Apostles to whom the promise was given by our Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Though we say it in sorrow, we must say it in candor, aye, in fidelity to the Master, that, as a matter of historical *fact*, "the gates of hell" *have*, to an extent that should inspire the most serious misgiving and dismay, "PREVAILED against" the Presbyterian communion. Only two out-posts—one in Scotland, and one in part of the United States,—and in both a sad breach has been made in the walls,—remain to be taken, and *the work is done!* In this country, Presbyterianism, save in New England, has not fulfilled its course; and yet it is rent into conflicting schisms, and agitated with wild "winds of doctrine," and is the unhappy plaything of what one of their own divines has called "the eternal Eureka of some new divinity." But of Presbyterianism in New England, in France, in Switzerland, in Denmark, in Germany, in Holland, in Prussia, over nearly all which countries it has had an uninterrupted run and reign of three hundred years, we can speak now historically. Gather the Presbyterians of all these lands into one vast assembly, and you will find, that they have, almost to an individual, "denied the Lord that bought them with his blood." Ask them again if the Bible that we acknowledge contains the inspired and infallible communications of God to men, and, with scarcely a dissenting voice they will tell you NO!—More than three hundred years was Popery in laying her

hand upon the laity, and repelling them from the cup; but in less than three hundred, in all the countries we have named, Presbyterianism has laid her hand upon the crown of JESUS, and torn it from his brow, and declared Him to be no God of hers. Again and again has she surrendered the Divinity of her Lord, taken off from His exalted Person the purple robe, and suffered Him to be crowned with shame and spitting. Rome, with all her abominations, never did it. Which then is *the Anti-christ* of the present day? I dare not answer—but one, whom the catholic faith has always held to be inspired, has said, “He is anti-christ *that denieth the Father and the Son;*” and again he says, “Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that JESUS CHRIST is come *in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an *anti-christ*.” (I. John ii. 22, 23: II. John 7.)

“Have you heard the dreadful news?” said a very remarkable lady, and *active* parishioner of mine, not many years ago.—“another clergyman in England gone over to Rome!”

“Indeed!” I replied; “it is really very sad; but” (endeavouring to adapt my answer to onewho had been nearly Swedenborgianized out of the doctrine of the resurrection, and liberalized and spiritualized, as I had heard, into the celebration of the communion with friend Gurney and his companions,) “I think he might have done worse—better believe too much than too little.” But this did not damp, in the least, the ardor or the satisfaction with which, sometime afterward, she renewed the lamentation, “O, Mr. ———, have you heard the dreadful news—have you not heard it? another of our clergy gone over to the Papists!”

“But why do they leave the Church,” said I; “do they believe the Church of England to be Erastianized and Puritanized beyond redemption? If so, I can only say that I do not agree with them.” Still, after a certain interval,

the old song came back, "O Mr. ———, have you heard the dreadful news—have you seen the papers—have you not heard—another clergyman apostatized?"

"Is it possible," I replied, "apostatized to what?"

"To *Popery*!"

"Ah, indeed!" I remarked; "I did not know but you meant, to the Independents or the Baptists, or possibly the Unitarians; however there is this consolation," said I to the lady, who carried the Church of England as some better employed ladies take their knitting, in her lap, "it is a consolation that not a speck nor mote can appear in the eye of the Church of England, but it seems instantly to give pain to the extremities of the body social; surely this is the Church of God!"

But as this continual dropping began, in the course of time, to wear a little on my powers of endurance, I said one day to the good lady, "Oh, Miss ———, have you heard the *dreadful news*?"

"No! pray dont tell me, if it is anything bad—I want to hear something good—but I believe there is no more any good—but do not tell me—any more apostacies to Rome?"

"Worse than that," I answered very solemnly.

"Why, what do you mean? What can be worse than that?"

"Indeed, Miss ———, I wonder you should not have heard it—very little is said about it however—a great many people do not even know it—but still, I think it ought to be known, and I hope you will do your part in letting our parishioners know it. How singular it is, that three or four men cannot leave the Church of England, for that of Rome, without rocking the earth to its centre and turning all faces black, when fifty thousand Presbyterians in Switzerland may deny the Lord and reject his word, and no one's equanimity be disturbed throughout all Christendom!"

"But tell me," said the lady, "that *news* you had to tell me."

"Well, Miss ——, I am endeavoring to break it to you by degrees, as you thought you could not bear it very well this evening; *that* is the news—not that fifty thousand, but that more than *thirty millions* of Presbyterians in Switzerland, in Germany, in Ireland, in New England, in Old England, and wherever Presbyterianism has held sway, both pastors and parishes, in one terrific mass, have disowned the Trinity, and denied the divinity of *JESUS*. Now, Miss ——, let me beg you not to make yourself so unhappy about half a dozen men, who imagining that our Church bids fair to run the same course, are seeking refuge in Rome; but, if you must be unhappy, take up your lamentation over the thirty millions of Protestants going down this moment to the grave, and the fifty or one hundred millions, who have already gone, with the open denial on their lips of "Him who bought them with His blood." This was, however, a sad experiment with my parishioner. *She never forgave me.*

And if here and there amidst the general apostacy, the continental mind is seen returning to some dim perceptions of the truth, with what crudities of mysticism or fanaticism is the effort marred, how partial is the acknowledgement of ancient doctrine, how sceptical and mutilated the re-appropriation of the books of Scripture, how abandoned the mind to the *theologia pectoris*, as it has been termed, or the theology of sentiment, as phrase imports. As the famished sailor, taken from a wreck, has lost the power of discerning wholesome and appropriate food, and impelled by blind hunger, seizes on the first nourishment that offers, so a German or Continental mind, thus waking out of infidelity, plunges at once, under his new impulses and new wants, into all the revelry of a wild and licentious divinity; or

else, as Popery is the only other religion within his reach, flies to her bosom as a shelter from his own intolerable distractions ; and we therefore hear without surprise, that the present family of Luther, for want of the purer Catholicity which Cromwell's descendant has found in England, and three hundred dissenting ministers have found to their heart's joy in America, have fled from the horrid and wild developments of Presbyterian metaphysics to the more genial bosom of the Papacy.

Having now seen that, as a Presbyterian, I was not in the Rock-founded Church, entitled, after the death of the Testator, to his gracious promise to be with her "until the end of the world," and that the gates of hell should not prevail against her, I felt a deep anxiety to quit the house thus fallen already, or else its last timbers shaking on the sand ; but believing that the part of it in which I dwelt might "last my time," I had only resolution enough to introduce my children into a Church, already belting the earth, every where acknowledging her Lord, and now, as eighteen centuries ago, "continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Yet I was unconsciously beginning to move in the middle path between Popery and Sectarianism—the too much and the too little in Christianity—toward what was now fast becoming the Church simultaneously of my affections and my understanding. An influence invisible attracted me on, a feeling unaccountable sustained me, that to go on would be safe. I inhaled already the fragrant air of a morning that my eyes had not yet seen: I beheld, though at a distance still, bright gleamings from the windows of a temple that my feet had not yet trodden.

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